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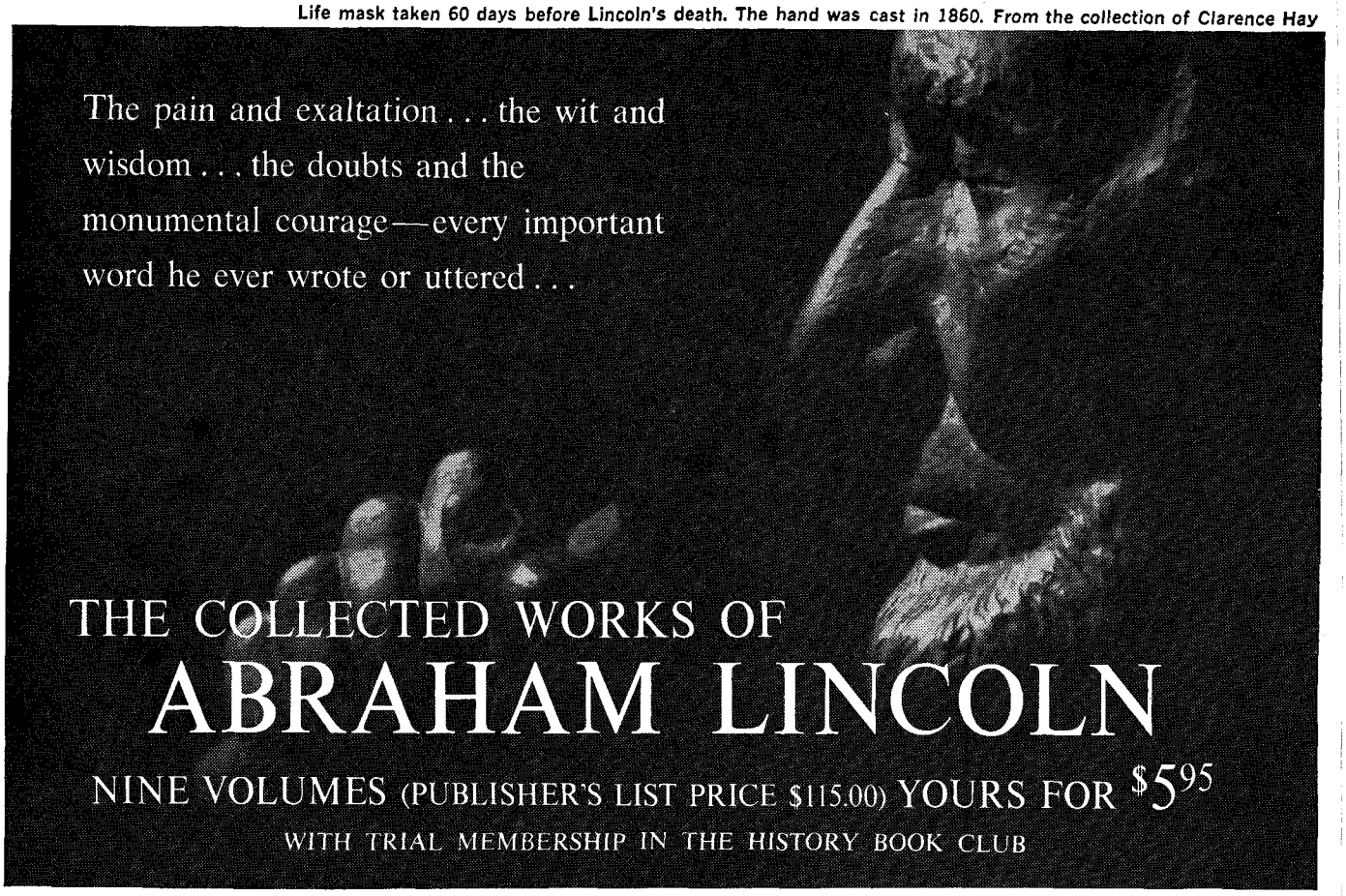
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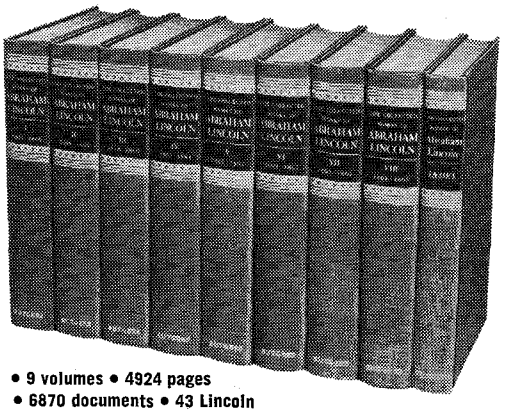

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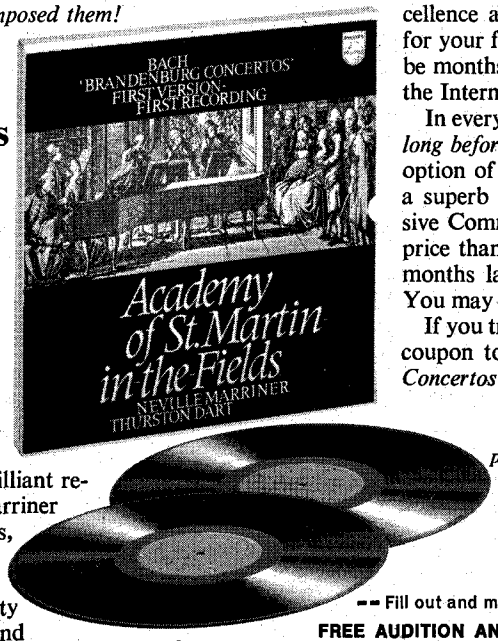

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TRB

from Washington
January 13, 1973

Near the Breaking Point

We have a dilemma here in Washington—the President's aloofness. Certainly the President has a right to secrecy in foreign affairs but certainly also the public has a right to know, within limits. Mr. Nixon is the most aloof President in history. In Vietnam, there has been a resumption, then a cessation, of murderous bombing. What rights do citizens have to know what is going on from the President himself?

Peace talks resume this week in Paris and, within a fortnight, Mr. Nixon gives his inaugural address, January 20. Presumably he will disclose his hand then, if he hasn't before. We have a hunch about this, but it is only a hunch. If there is one group in the country pinching itself, rubbing its eyes, and wondering how long this presidential blackout can continue, it is the Washington press corps! Our hunch is that Vietnam can't last long. It is based on the TRB Elastic Band Principle. If you stretch an elastic band long enough you don't know when it will snap but you are sure it will snap. Everything we see and hear now makes us think that the snapping point is near. "I am confident now as never before," said Ted Kennedy, quietly, last month, "that if the President and Dr. Kissinger can't end America's role themselves, then Congress will end it for them. . . . We must be out of Vietnam in early 1973."

That's a good quote to remember; even better, perhaps, is Senator Saxbe's, of Ohio, a member of Mr. Nixon's party, that to have resumed bombing "the President must be out of his senses."

Mr. Nixon isn't out of his senses, but suppose he were; what would we know about it? He is an invisible President, holding in his hand the lives of thousands in Vietnam, almost beyond the immediate reach of the Cabinet, the Court, the Congress and you and me. He leaves explanations to others. His aloofness exposes him to attack. "But at least Lyndon Johnson gave a convincing impression that Vietnam was for him a personal agony," said the *London Sunday Times;* "the chilling truth about President Nixon is that he has shown no such personal concern." Unfair, perhaps, but partly the result of White House silence.

There are ways outside normal politics for the public to express powerful displeasure. If it hadn't been for Vietnam, Lyndon Johnson would be finishing his second term, and Hubert Humphrey would now be polishing his inaugural address! LBJ couldn't settle the war and decided to quit. We suspect that if Mr. Nixon wants a favorable place in history he will get the war behind him, fast. We think he has stretched his own aloofness about as far as it can go.

It's worth a look. As a candidate in 1968, Mr. Nixon promised an "open government." But in four years he has held only 28 press conferences. FDR had two a week. He told the White House Correspondents' Association, May, 1971, with one of those electric smiles that he wanted "tough questions" and "I like them that way: don't give me a friendly question; only a hard, tough question gets that kind of answer . . . that tests the man. And it is the responsibility of the press to test the man, whoever he is."

It's not easy to test the man if you don't see him. The President has changed his views on so many things. Take the Cabinet. When he introduced his first Cabinet in an unprecedented nationwide TV broadcast in December, 1968, he said, "every one of these men . . . is an independent thinker" who would provide "superior or even great leadership." He said he didn't want "yes-men," but men who would "speak their minds."

Alas, today, for the second term, only two of the original 12 are left. Secretary Hickel couldn't even see the President to "speak his mind." The Cabinet Concept faded, and the Fortress Concept took over. Former Lyndon Johnson aide, George E. Reedy, calls the American presidential system, at best, "a form which isolates the man who holds the nation's highest office, and shields him from reality."

White House assistant John Ehrlichman, last June 17, was asked if he agreed with GOP national chairman Dole's charge that the news media has attempted to sabotage the Vietnam war policy. "That's a little strong for me," he answered carefully, but he said the President is bored by press conferences where he gets "a lot of flabby and fairly dumb questions."

This is certainly an arguable case. But consider how cut off the President is: no Cabinet meeting up to last week anyway since November 8; no news conference since October 5; no meeting of the National Security Council since May 8. Does the President have his finger on the public pulse? He got a huge landslide, didn't he? But was that for Mr. Nixon or against George McGovern, and why did they elect a Democratic Congress? Here are two recent comments:

"The secrecy system has become much less a means by which government protects national security than a means by which government safeguards its reputation, dissembles its purposes, buries its mistakes, manipulates its citizens, maximizes its power and corrupts itself": Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., December 11.

"Never, in my 21 years in Washington and 33 years in the news business, have I seen such a blatant attack on the First Amendment as we are witnessing today. Ladies and gentlemen, the press is in trouble. And while we won't win any popularity prizes among the people, if the press is in trouble, then the people are in trouble": Warren Rogers, outgoing president of the National Press Club, December 13.

The White House will argue that the administration has explained itself; look at the Kissinger statements. But this is a President-oriented democracy, and the Kissinger on-again, off-again "peace" comments produced one of the gloomiest reactions we have ever seen, at home and abroad. As to world opinion, we have always been sensitive to it whatever we pretend, since the Founding Fathers referred to "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind." We doubt if we have ever had a worse press abroad than now.

We try not to be unfair. Being President is a tough job. We suspect Mr. Nixon hopes for some grand surprise peace spectacular and is registering feigned unconcern by ostentatiously hailing football winners. We prayerfully hope he gets peace this time. If he can't, we think Congress will.

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Shooting at The Press

The war on journalists, like the war in Vietnam, has reopened after a brief phony truce. Resident White House TV spokesman Clay T. Whitehead, picking up where Vice President Agnew left off, dropped the first bomb with an attack on network news "objectivity" and "so-called professionals who confuse sensationalism with sense and who dispense elitist gossip in the guise of news analysis." As with the North Vietnamese in Paris, there was the offer of a tempting future reward: if broadcasters cool down anti-administration network news coverage, their three-year broadcast licenses may be turned into permanent franchises. Media owners may remember what was done for distressed newspaper owners by the Failing Newspaper Act of 1970, which allowed newspaper monopolies—and profits—to be guaranteed by the US attorney general, who alone makes a finding that the merger of printing and business operations of two newspapers is necessary to keep one or both from failing. Though the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission had termed the proposed act monopolistic, the Nixon administration supported and Congress approved it.

There will be predictable and necessary sharp retorts to Clay Whitehead from network officials, broadcasters and politicians, and it's doubtful whether legislation of the character Whitehead projected could be enacted. But don't underestimate his long-term goal. Individual television station owners are a conservative breed. They have been unhappy for years with even the few tentative ventures in controversial reporting undertaken by network news organizations. Recent affiliate meetings of CBS and NBC have seen open and growing criticism of network news from individual station owners. Up to now such criticism has worked to limit hard, straightforward reporting and analysis by the network news organizations. In the future it may well deter what effective television news monitoring of government we now have.

The Whitehead sally is not all the administration and its friends are coming forth with in this assault on the media. Local courts and grand juries—encouraged by earlier promptings of former Attorney General Mitchell and rulings of the Nixon Supreme Court—are moving broadly across the country to subpoena newsmen, their notes and records. In addition, an effort is being made to keep from courts,

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the press and the public information that today is available under the Freedom of Information Act. One of the many sections of a proposed revision of the federal rules of evidence, to be introduced in Congress early this month, substantially expands present definition of what may be considered privileged as a state secret, so as to include any material affecting foreign policy. The government privilege to withhold information on internal working documents, which formerly had to be invoked by an agency head, would be made by the government attorney involved.

A third front that is about to open up in Congress is more technical and less dramatic than those mentioned above, but with implications that are just as serious. Under existing law it is a crime for a federal government employee to "communicate" any classified information (not just military secrets) "affecting the security of the United States" to an agent of a foreign government or a member of a Communist organization. So says Section 783(b) of Title 50 of the US Code. The penalty for violation is $10,000 fine or 10 years in jail or both. Congress passed Section 783(b) over President Truman's veto as part of the ill-famed Internal Security Act of 1950, at a time when Americans were fighting Communists in Korea and pursuing them hotly at home. Senators Joe McCarthy and William Jenner were riding high on reds in government, the Hiss and Rosenberg cases were on the front pages, and a congressman from California named Richard Nixon, chairman of the House un-American activities subcommittee which drafted the language for Section 783(b), was gaining fame.

Twenty-two years later with Richard Nixon in the White House, a campaign is being readied to expand Section 783(b) to cover what some in his administration, on Capitol Hill and even on the Supreme Court appear to believe is another "threat" to national survival—the passing along of classified information, not to Communists or foreign agents but to the American press and even individual congressmen. They would counter the threat by dropping from Section 783(b) the requirement that the recipient of the classified information be a Communist or a foreign agent: just make it a crime to give such information to "an unauthorized person." And to widen the net, eliminate the need for the source to be a government employee (he could be a consultant to a firm doing government business, *i.e.*, Daniel Ellsberg). And if you want to get at a publication or radio-TV broadcaster or a senator speaking out, add another section which makes it a crime to "knowingly" use classified information "in a manner prejudicial to the safety or interest of the United States."

This would be less ominous if we were back in the old days when only potentially harmful military secrets were classified; today the secrecy stamp goes on almost any document the government doesn't want advertised.

The language quoted above is not hypothetical. It comes from paragraphs in the preliminary draft of a 524-page bill to be introduced shortly by John McClellan (D, Ark.), chairman of a Senate Judiciary subcommittee on criminal laws and procedures. The subject of his legislation is not classification or press leaks—and thereby hangs the danger. For the language is part of a major revision and reform of Title 18 of the Federal Criminal Code, a project begun in 1966 when Congress authorized a bipartisan national commission on reform of the federal criminal laws, headed by Edmund G. Brown. The Brown commission completed its draft code in 1971.

Specific language for the McClellan bill under a section entitled "Misuse of Classified Information" has not been settled. G. Robert Blakey, the McClellan subcommittee's staff director (and a consultant to the Brown commission) wrote the language we have quoted and is quick to point out that whatever is in the McClellan draft will probably be changed during the subcommittee and full committee hearings and mark up. "No one is out to get the press," he says, "the press involvement is accidental." According to a *Washington Post* story, however, some congressional critics are disturbed by his language; they say its adoption "would be tantamount to passage of an 'official secrets act.' " Other members of Sen. McClellan's subcommittee, particularly Sam Ervin, are coming up with alternative language. Blakey (and presumably McClellan) have no objection to changing the words, so long as the new language "doesn't narrow present law." In the end, Blakey notes, Congress will have to face the main issue: "How broad should the First Amendment be interpreted and still protect the national security?"

In the past the interpretation has been pretty broad. Congress didn't get around to approving an espionage act until 1911. In 1917, with war fever high and the nation fearful of spies, Congress made its last substantial amendment of the espionage acts, the Senate having turned down a proposal to give the President power to outlaw publication, under criminal threat, of specific war plan information. The Senate would not, as Senator Henry Ashurst said, grant power "to filter out the news through some man."

The Brown commission, in its deliberations on

COMING: Who owns the airlines? The big banks do. A report by K. G. J. Pillai

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Section 783(b), considered how to deal with security leaks where espionage is not involved. It decided that since present law narrowly defined impermissible communications as those given to "designated recipients," *i.e.*, Communists and foreign agents, it "substantially eliminates first amendment and undue government secrecy worries . . ." It also said that an expansion of the section as envisioned by Blakey's language, would make it "necessary to provide a defense of improper classification in order to avoid the danger of using classification and the threat of criminal sanctions to conceal government policy from those who have the right to know." Blakey in his draft does include a reference to improper classification, but the Brown commission recognized the weaknesses of such an "affirmative defense." "Litigating the propriety of classification," it said, "would effectively destroy the effectiveness of proper classification" and the risk in disclosing information in the hope that it be found improperly classified was considered "undue."

Since the Brown report, we have had the Pentagon Papers case with the government's attempt and failure to get prior restraint on publication of classified material and the Gravel decision, with its limitation of the speech and debate privileges. The trial of Daniel Ellsberg will tell us more about how far under current law the government can go to punish the source of a leak.

It is no secret that many stories which reflect unfavorably on an administration—particularly in the defense and foreign policy fields—have their roots in classified information received directly or indirectly by reporters. "Leaks" have traditionally plagued Presidents and their subordinates. ("Leaks" that reflect favorably on administrations are not only tolerated but welcomed.) Numerous instances have been publicized where, to track down an embarrassing disclosure, the Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon administrations have called in State or Defense Department investigators, used lie detectors and even employed the FBI. The Nixon White House, perhaps the most aggressively anti-media in our history, has outdone its predecessors, setting up an in-house group of press investigators (nicknamed the "plumbers") with David Young (who worked on classification problems under John Ehrlichman) and E. Howard Hunt (formerly with the CIA, later of Watergate bugging fame).

The administration's position on the criminal law code revision language probably will not be known until the Ellsberg trial has ended. Meanwhile those concerned over further legislative restrictions on freedom of the press will have to watch closely as the code revision works its way through the Senate.

But the press, including TV, will continue to be on trial. Too often it misuses its freedom by sloppy reporting, sensationalism, triviality and the downplaying or deletion of news or comment that might irritate or inconvenience some big shot. The press' right to special standing in the society is not enhanced by deference to pressures from chambers of commerce or the White House. The press in America is either an accurate, independent and therefore diverse critical force or it has about as much value to the people as does the press in the Soviet Union. Big money buys advertising (a form of brainwashing), and it sometimes buys politicians. Does it buy the press?

Big government works hard to protect and preserve the reputations and power of the people who run that government. Many of them—particularly those who fail to recognize the value of our competing independent institutions—fall into the habit of thinking that they alone know what's good for the country because only they know the whole truth. But history has shown the facts that reach them are selected. The truths they know are *their* truths, always self-serving, which they want to dominate the news through countless press conferences, briefings, announcements, backgrounders and inspired leaks.

When journalists are doing their job they are not transmission belts for Richard Nixon or Clay Whitehead's "objectivity." Whitehead showed how little he understands the role of newsmen when he said, ". . . the working journalist, if he follows a professional code of ethics, gives up the right to present his personal point of view when he is on the job." That's sophomoric hogwash. A journalist could not and should not serve as some sort of recording machine. His personal views, developed through training and experience, dominate his determination of truth and falsity and his selection of what to report. That is what he is paid for. We should be grateful that enough reporters are pushed by conscience and personal interest into those very areas where no government or congressional flack would venture unpressed—corruption, failures, evasions of truth or responsibility.

Even when a public official speaks, be he in government or part of the opposition, his statement is not to be automatically taken as fact. Such men often mislead for their own purposes, using half-truths instead of whole. Their statements should be taken as one fact among many, the meaning of which remains to be ascertained and explained. For remember, the journalist works not for the spokesmen but for the people. The press is their representative on the scene, their questioner, their advocate for truth.

This view of the function of the press annoys officialdom and is not always accepted by the press itself. It is, nonetheless, in a society increasingly filled with hired advertising and public relations men, the only one productive of informed opinion. Any less aggressive view of the free press role would lead to public opinion molded by overwhelming propaganda publicists. The end of *that* road is corruption of the governed by their governors.

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Harry S Truman

In the perspective of 20 years it is plain that the memorable quality of Harry S Truman as President of the United States was his reality—not realism, a philosophy consciously adopted and resolutely maintained, but reality, objective existence in a state of clear visibility. Public appreciation of this quality has been greatly enhanced by its scarcity value. Contemporary political leadership is thoroughly imbued with a philosophy holding that the métier of a statesman is not to be anything, but to Project an Image. The basis of this is the belief that the primate classified by Mencken as *Boobus americanus* is allergic to reality.

It was not so in 1948. That was the unforgettable year in which the Democratic Party decided, before the campaign opened, that its goose was cooked because it could offer nobody but Truman and the mightiest of wizards could not make Truman look like anything but himself. He was Give-'em-Hell Harry, sometime captain of artillery, and the veriest moron could not be bamboozled into seeing him as Adonis, Sir Galahad, or Jack the Giant-Killer. In that year the Democrats lacked money enough to pay the fees of any really glittering advertising agency, and it would have been a waste anyhow.

And then he won! It was, regardless of the man's polity or personality, perhaps the most salutary political episode of the century. The significance of this escaped most of the pundits because they fell into the common error of regarding their own standards as absolute. Measured by those standards, Truman was not much. Since Andrew Johnson, no President had been so derided by the sophisticates. They dismissed the fact that, if not much, he was yet something, and therefore came under the rule *luscus inter caecos*, "in the realm of the blind a one-eyed man is king." In a company whose individuals were 10 percent man and 90 percent figments of some publicist's imagination, a veritable captain of artillery, alive and kicking, was not ridiculous; he made the others ridiculous.

So he held the presidency for seven years, and a philosopher might find his career and personality epitomized in the fact that he sat at a desk with an identification plaque reading, "The Buck Stops Here." Truman was far from infallible, but he was there. The actual President was the man sitting at the desk. When a mistake was made, it was his boner, never fobbed off on some wretched subordinate; so when a triumph was achieved, it was indisputably his. It is evidence of the nastiness in American public life that small-souled politicians and pedants have never ceased their efforts to prove that the seven great decisions he was called on to make were either not Truman's, or else not triumphs.

These were, in chronological order, the atom bomb that demolished the then-existing art of war, the Greece-Turkey takeover occupying the vacant throne of the dying *Pax Britannica*, the Marshall Plan establishing magnanimity as an instrument of national policy, Point Four extending humanism, NATO containing Stalinist communism, the Berlin airlift keeping an oath to our own hurt, and Korea taking the profit out of conquest. All were of *his* time, not this time. For good or for ill, these are hinges on which history has turned, not American history alone, but to a great extent the history of the world. Seven times the buck was passed to Truman and the buck stopped there. For none of those decisions did he ever lay responsibility on a subordinate, or offer an apology to any man. He was it, and all of it.

The net value of his decisions has been and, after 20 years, still is the subject of acrimonious debate. It is generally agreed that the Berlin airlift was necessary and was a success, and that the Marshall Plan contributed much to the recovery of Europe after the 1939-45 holocaust. Some consider use of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima was unnecessary—indeed a crime, and the assumption of British responsibility in the Near East a mistake, while others have always held the fixed idea that Point Four (nonmilitary aid to the have-nots) was imperialism, NATO a fraud, and the Korean war a betrayal next door to treason.

Truman's friends are confident that no mistake was made in any of the seven but, except for the Marshall Plan and the airlift, they were of such long-range effect that more decades must pass before historians can be sure. More recent events, however, furnish light on one point. When General MacArthur, against the President's warning, escalated the Korean affair into war with China and, as a result, got what Nasser got in Sinai, Truman slung the general out on his ear, obtained a cease-fire, and started the Panmunjom negotiations that Eisenhower successfully concluded. When the Pentagon, using the inch-inch technique, escalated the Vietnam affair, Lyndon Johnson was ruled by, instead of ruling the generals. Vietnam certainly has not proved the inferiority of Truman's policy.

In bouncing MacArthur, idol of the right, and, earlier, Henry A. Wallace, idol of the left, both for insubordination, Truman proceeded in the traditional manner of a captain of artillery busting down to buck private a sergeant who got out of line. Again, when he discovered that two of his appointees had turned into influence-peddlers, he proceeded in the manner of a military police patrol breaking up a barroom brawl—he threw them downstairs, with terrific dust and clatter.

When his successor, General Eisenhower, had to get rid, not of two but five subordinates for the same reason, he accepted their resignations in flattering letters and in one case turned out the troops to pass in review. "I see why he had to fire them," commented ex-President Truman, "but I don't see why he had to kiss them on both cheeks."

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He couldn't see because he didn't know the code of the Image-Projectors. But he had a code. On January 20, 1953, the President-elect was fuming because without his knowledge or consent someone, whom he supposed to be a favor-currying sycophant, had issued an order to Major John Eisenhower, then in Korea, to report in Washington not later than January 19. But Dwight Eisenhower's resentment was stifled when he learned that the order had been issued personally by the man who was then, and for a few minutes longer was still to be Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the United States. Truman knew the regulations, but as a realist he knew that the army had plenty of majors to be able to spare one briefly, while the major had only one chance to see his father become President of the United States. It wasn't etiquette. It was basic courtesy.

At any rate, Truman will never have the epitaph given in the *Arabian Nights* to some eastern king: "Time passed over him and it was if he had never been." For good or for ill, he incised his mark upon adamantine history. His story brings to mind the fabulous Kilroy of World War II. No reader of the story of the republic, coming to the years from 1945 to 1953, will fail to note the assertion, "Truman Was Here."

Congress and the War

When members of Congress gathered in Washington last week to begin the 93rd session, they were in an ugly mood. On one side of Capitol Hill Senator William Fulbright (D, Ark.) called a meeting of the Foreign Relations Committee which he chairs, and when it was over, announced that the members were prepared to write a bill to end the war. He said they had agreed that if "some settlement" were not reached by January 20, "then it is our intention to employ legislative powers to bring the war to a close." He said the committee would start work on a bill on the Tuesday following Nixon's inauguration. In a brief caucus before the session began on January 3, Democratic senators endorsed without dissent a statement of policy by Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D, Mont.). He said, "There is no greater national need than the termination, forthwith, of our involvement in the war in Vietnam." Without saying how, he made it clear that Congress would "seek to bring about complete disinvolvement" if the President would not. It was a message without legal force.

A sharper message came from the caucus of Democratic representatives, which met on January 2. The Democrats were meeting to elect officers and replace as majority leader the late Representative Hale Boggs (D, La.). As expected, they reelected Representative Carl Albert (D, Okla.) speaker of the House, and chose Representative Thomas "Tip" O'Neill (D, Mass.) to replace Boggs. But the Indochina war policy they endorsed was remarkable, the strongest statement of its kind ever to come from the House. By a vote of 154-75 the caucus adopted a resolution drawn up by the Democratic Study Group, an association of liberal congressmen.

In the past, the House has intercepted amendments to cut off Indochina war funds. Last year, for example, the Senate passed two such measures, and the House none. The House Democratic leadership has been opposed to end-the-war bills, but now the mood is changing. Tip O'Neill supported the DSG resolution, and even Carl Albert told a group of visitors last week that they could expect the House to cut off money for the war if the President didn't act quickly. The caucus resolution has no binding effect, and the DSG concedes that if an end-the-war amendment were put before the House today, it would not pass. But as a statement of intent, it deserves to be recorded and remembered after the inauguration.

The declaration takes the President to task for the "unprecedented and reprehensible bombing of North Vietnam which resulted in killing of civilians and a substantial increase in the number of American POWs and missing." It says, "the U. S. has more than fulfilled any obligation it ever had to South Vietnam and the Thieu regime." And it concludes with fanfare and a pledge: "the Democratic members of the House of Representatives hereby declare it to be Democratic policy in the 93rd Congress that no further public funds be authorized, appropriated or expended for U. S. military combat operations in or over Indochina, and that such operations be terminated immediately, subject only to arrangements necessary to insure safe withdrawal of American troops and the return of American POWs." We will have to wait to find out how this resolve translates into votes.

Quote of the Week

Billy Graham, the moral leader and friend of Presidents, was asked by *Newsweek*'s Jane Whitmore how he felt about Mr. Nixon's resumption of the bombing of North Vietnam. His unpublished answer: ". . . The whole world has a great deal of violence going on which doesn't occupy the headlines. There are many people being killed in this country by drunken drivers and crime. Man is prone to violence and there will be no cessation of that, not until the Christ of our Kingdom comes." But what of the bombing? "I deplore the suffering and the killing in the war and I pray it can be ended as soon as possible. But we also have to realize that there are hundreds of thousands of deaths attributed to smoking. . . ."

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Litton's Friends

The Civil Service Commission is designated chief watchdog under the Executive Order establishing standards of ethical conduct for federal government employees. The commission's own code of conduct says, "an employee shall avoid any action which might result in, *or create the appearance of* using public office for private gain; giving preferential treatment to any person . . . losing complete independence or impartiality . . . or affecting adversely the confidence of the public. . . ." These rules are worth remembering in looking at Litton Industries and Roy L. Ash, its former president and the next director of the Office of Management and Budget. Ash will not be your ordinary government official, confirmed by the Senate and available for congressional questioning. As OMB chief he will preside over budget decisions in secret —at a time when his old company's survival depends in good part on billions of federal dollars in claims and contracts.

Gordon Rule, a winner of the US Navy civilian merit award in 1971 and a senior official in navy procurement activities, told a Senate committee last December 19 that in his opinion, "it is a mistake for the President to nominate Mr. Ash and I think it is a worse mistake for him to accept the job." Rule said he thought President Eisenhower, who had warned of the military-industrial complex, "must be twitching in his grave."

The evening after his Senate appearance, Rule was visited at home by his immediate superior, Admiral Isaac C. Kidd, Jr., asking Rule to resign. When Rule refused, Kidd reassigned him to an insignificant job with the Navy Logistics Management School. Rule last week appealed his transfer to the Civil Service Commission.

Now that he has gone to the government ethics watchdog agency, his mood should shift the spotlight to another prospective conflict of interest involving Litton. The vice chairman of the Civil Service Commission, Jayne Baker Spain, not only is a former division president of Litton and the beneficial owner of 9400 preference and 4465 preferred Litton shares, but to this day sits as one of the 11-member board of directors of Litton Industries. And despite the fact that Commissioner Spain is a full-time federal employee, she receives $7500 a year from Litton plus $200 a day and expenses when she does actual Litton work under a contract that won't expire until July 1976.

Until now, Mrs. Spain's Litton board membership, stock holdings and five-year employment contract have drawn no criticism, but not because they were hidden. She is listed prominently in Litton's annual report, and the company's 1972 proxy statement clearly outlines the extra pay she receives.

Even the unsophisticated can see that every civilian Defense Department employee dealing with Litton—which does almost one billion dollars of government business—comes under Civil Service Commission jurisdiction. The failure to question Mrs. Spain, like the appointment of Ash, represents an insensitivity to conflict of interest—and that reflects more than anything the growing public cynicism toward government.

Pentagon Inflation

Cost overruns have become such an accustomed part of Pentagon procurement that the General Accounting Office has taken to issuing overrun reports every three months. Representative Les Aspin (D, Wisc.), a member of the House Armed Services Committee, has released the latest of these chronicles of bad news.

From the end of March to the end of June of 1972, the Pentagon's estimates for the ultimate cost of 47 major weapons systems increased from $98.3 billion to $100.6 billion. The development estimates for these same weapons (the point from which overruns are calculated) originally totalled $87.1 billion. In the second quarter, the navy accounted for almost the entire $2.3 billion increase in overruns. Here are the best (worst) examples cited:

► The trouble-ridden MARK 48 torpedo went up another $25 million, raising the estimated cost of completing this system to $1.96 billion; the original development estimate was $1.75 billion.

► The Sparrow F air-to-air missile was up $51 million to a program cost of $1.28 billion; it was originally $708 million.

► The Condor air-to-surface missile was up $144 million to a program cost of $525 million; it was originally $441 million.

► The P-3C patrol aircraft was up $198 million to a cost of $2.49 billion; it was originally $1.29 billion.

► The EA-6B electronic warfare aircraft was up $356 million to a program cost of $1.58 billion; it was originally $818 million.

► The A-7E attack aircraft was up $626 million to a cost of $2.78 billion; it was originally $1.47 billion.

► The SSN-688 nuclear attack submarine was extended another year for an additional $1.02 billion. The new program cost is now estimated at $8.1 billion; it was originally $5.75 billion.

There may be other overruns which have been hidden from public scrutiny. The navy, for example, has taken the unusual step of classifying the cost data on the Trident ballistic-missile submarine which is to replace some of the older models in the Polaris fleet. The Pentagon's most recent estimate for the first ten Tridents was $13.5 billion, and the navy was given almost one billion dollars for the current fiscal year to purchase the nuclear power plants for the first four boats. At the time Congress authorized this amount, the navy did not have the working drawings for the sub-

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marine. If the estimated cost of the Trident program has since grown, it is being kept from the public.

The government's rationale for classifying the cost estimate of Trident is "national security." We are more inclined to think it is to keep the American taxpayers in the dark. Whether each Trident is estimated to cost one billion dollars or two billion dollars would not be very important to Soviet intelligence, but it would be to Congress and the voters. Unless the President is planning to *sell* nuclear submarines to Russia he ought to make the costs of Trident public.

Social Security

A Bigger Bite

Despite all the political talk of holding the line on taxes during 1973, millions of American workers were in for a shock when they got their first paychecks of the new year—a cut in takehome pay because of a Social Security tax increase voted by Congress and approved by President Nixon.

Social Security tax increases are nothing new. But the tax has become distinctly regressive, falling harder than ever on the poor and even those of middle income. Millions of individuals and families will pay more in Social Security taxes this year than federal income taxes. Low-income workers and families today can escape all or much of income tax through special exemptions and deductions, but there are no such avenues of escape or exclusion of Social Security, not even for the lowest-paid worker or the lowest-income families. A newsletter issued by Tax Analysts and Advocates, a public interest law firm, says "a family of four earning up to $12,000 (in 1973) will pay higher Social Security tax than income tax. A family of four earning $10,800 will pay a higher combined rate (Social Security and income tax) than a family earning $20,000."

Social Security started as a modest New Deal program aiming to give retirement benefits to older workers and other cash benefits to the disabled and to widows and children of deceased workers. In 1973, Social Security has become a mighty social and economic engine, providing benefits to more than 28 million Americans, involving 96 million workers and their employers and providing 25 percent of all monies collected by the Treasury. In the coming year, Social Security tax collections will be 29 times as great as 1949, totaling about $63.4 billion. In 1973, workers and their employers each will pay 5.85 percent on the first $10,800 earned (up from 5.2 percent on $9000), meaning that almost half of all employees will be paying the tax throughout the year. In 1973, a man with a wife and two children and earning $7500 will pay about $488 in federal income tax (the estimate is from Internal Revenue) and $438.75 in Social Security. Workers in the $5000-a-year bracket will pay more in Social Security than in income tax.

In 1973, a $10,800-a-year assembly line worker will pay 5.85 percent of his income in Social Security ($632), the same amount paid by a corporation chairman whose salary is, say, $335,000. But the chairman's Social Security tax rate comes to only 0.19 percent. What's more, if the chairman has income from interest, dividends and capital gains (as he most likely will), such unearned income escapes Social Security tax altogether. The inequities go on: Social Security falls unduly hard on multiple-worker families. For example, a household where both husband and wife work and each earns $10,800 will pay $1264 in Social Security tax. But a wage earner with nonworking spouse and earning $21,600—or as much as the working couple combined—will pay only $632. Depending on future work times and earnings, the two couples in this illustration might well draw the same amount in Social Security benefits despite the fact that the working couple paid twice as much in taxes.

One wonders why Social Security tax increases sail so easily through Congress despite their increasing unfairness and regressiveness. The answer lies first in the popular conception, pushed by politicians and Social Security administrators, that the program is "insurance" and comparable to contributions made and benefits received under a private insurance plan. Social Security, while certainly having beneficial results, is no insurance program: Benefits are not predetermined as they are under insurance and benefits are not even vested individually. John A. Brittain, writing in a Brookings Institution research report, says "the risks or expected costs are not actuarily evaluated in the usual sense because the expected loss for any individual is not related to age, health and other characteristics, and because demographic projections are not the sole basis for forecasting the costs of the program, even in the aggregate." Also, Social Security is compulsory; I cannot duck out of it as I can cancel my private insurance. Then too, individual benefits are not closely related to tax paid; persons who have retired have received, and will continue to receive, benefits exceeding payments, and that pattern will continue as Congress keeps increasing the benefits. (They were raised by 20 percent in 1972.)

Of course, there is no guarantee, as there is under insurance, that benefits will not be reduced and the whole program cancelled. Such prospect is sheer conjecture, perhaps fantasy, but the possibility does exist. As things stand now, any contributions into Social Security help pay benefits to my aged mother and my own benefits will depend on the largesse of future Congresses and my children.

Another factor shielding Social Security from criti-

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cism is the unperceived and unappreciated burden. Under Social Security there is no payroll tax form to file; the tax is withheld, virtually invisibly. Few persons really think about paying Social Security taxes and fewer still are aware of how much they actually contribute. No one tells them and they don't think to ask. At first glance, the Social Security tax rate is low compared with the federal income tax: 5.85 percent *vs.* 14 percent for the lowest income tax bracket. But there are no exemptions under Social Security, no standard or minimum deduction. A working father with three dependents may eke out a pay of $3700 a year, the bare poverty level minimum, but at least he will escape all federal income tax; he can't escape paying $217.35 in Social Security tax.

Workers also might take consolation in the fact that employees contribute equally into the Social Security kitty. But, of course, workers pay both parts of the tax, since employers view their contributions as money that would be available to employees for salary in lieu of the tax. Either that, or employers jack up prices accordingly.

Heaven forbid that all this should suggest doing away with Social Security, a la Goldwater 1964. But the inequity and regressiveness in the system call for reforms to eliminate the burden Social Security taxes place on the poor. In suggesting reform, one thinks immediately of including in the Social Security tax system exemptions and deductions similar to those used in the income tax system. Workers below the poverty line might be exempted from almost all Social Security taxes, requiring a token payment at most. The revenue loss could be made up through a slight boost in income taxes if necessary, and shifting any added tax collections to the Social Security fund. The wage base on which Social Security taxes are paid could be made higher, or perhaps the tax could be required on all income. That corporate chairman, for example, might pay the tax on all his $335,000 salary. In that case, the tax rate could be somewhat lowered. A more substantial reform could be replacement of the payroll tax by the income tax, but it's doubtful if any Congress or administration would buy that idea. It would require major adjustment of the income tax system. A more moderate reform would be to integrate the payroll and income tax: For example, cash refunds could be paid to workers or families whose payroll taxes exceeded their income tax.

Whatever reform one prefers, Social Security tax change should be included in the forthcoming general congressional debate on tax reform. Reform of the payroll tax system is a feasible way of helping poor families at a time when political and public appetite for anti-poverty programs is waning.

Robert W. Dietsch

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The Nixon Watch

Bombs Away

When the President undertook on Monday, December 18, to bomb the North Vietnamese back into the Paris negotiations that he had terminated on the 13th, he had gone 32 days without saying a word in public about the Vietnam war and his hopes of ending it with "a peace that will last." When he had a spokesman announce on December 30 that the negotiations were to be resumed and that the bombing of Hanoi, Haiphong and other places in the heartland of North Vietnam had been halted, he still had said nothing in person and in public about the war, the bombardment, the worldwide revulsion that the bombardment caused, its heavy cost in men and planes, and the elusive settlement. While hundreds of American B-52s and other planes were dropping ruin and death on North Vietnam, and during the first four days after the worst of the bombardment was suspended, the President appeared only twice in public, apart from fleeting passage through Washington, Florida and Kansas City airports. He dined with Mrs. Nixon and his friend C. G. Rebozo at a hotel near his Florida home, and he did brief homage to Harry Truman at his bier and home in Independence. In this same period, he never once permitted his White House spokesmen to say that he had ordered the expanded and intensified bombing of North Vietnam or even that he had authorized the short pauses over the Christmas and New Year holidays that in fact occurred. At the White House, at Camp David in the Maryland mountains, at his home on Key Biscayne, and again at Camp David and the White House for a lonely New Year weekend, the President kept himself in almost total silence and seclusion. His daughters and their husbands were in Europe. Mrs. Nixon flew on New Year's Eve morning to the Rose Bowl ceremonies in Pasadena. When a reporter asked Deputy Press Secretary Gerald Warren whether Mr. Nixon was really and wholly alone at the White House on New Year's Eve night, Warren answered, "Well, Manolo was here." Manolo Sanchez, the President's valet and friend, is a merry fellow, utterly devoted to Mr. Nixon. For a President troubled and laden as this President must have been—could the blood and tears and wreck of North Vietnam have been altogether curtained from him?—Manolo Sanchez may have been the company he needed and was the only company he allowed himself on the night that ushered in the first year of his second term.

Aside from the mentioned exceptions and two others (he was photographed on New Year's Day with a winning football coach and recorded a tribute the next day to Roberto Clemente, a Puerto Rican baseball player for the Pittsburgh Pirates killed in a plane

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crash), the President chose during the period in review to portray himself to the country and the world solely through his press spokesmen, Ronald Ziegler and Gerald Warren. They dealt with many matters other than Vietnam. But they could not get away from Vietnam. The terror unleashed there, the terror that they were instructed not to acknowledge as terror or to attribute to the President, dominated the news and the questions addressed to them. Forty-eight hours before Ziegler, the chief spokesman, began to field the questions brought on by the new bombing, Henry Kissinger announced that his October, November and December meetings in Paris with Hanoi's principal negotiator, Le Duc Tho, had failed to produce an agreement that "the President considers just and fair." The contrast between this confession and Kissinger's earlier assurance that peace was at hand was beginning to shock and numb the country when, at the White House on the 18th, Ziegler set the tone of the weird time that followed.

Ziegler, a bland and personable young man who is a master at purveying evasive claptrap when the President prescribes evasive claptrap, was asked why bombing had been ordered on a scale never before ordered in Vietnam and Indochina. For starters, he refused to say that bombing on any scale had been ordered. The fact that it had been was not announced, then or later, at either the White House or the Pentagon. Defense Secretary Melvin Laird and his Pentagon spokesmen merely confirmed reports from Saigon that renewed mining of Haiphong harbor and bombing throughout North Vietnam, in areas where no bombing had occurred since October, had been authorized. Avoiding such ugly words as bombs and bombing, Ziegler referred only to "actions which the Secretary of Defense and the Defense Department have mentioned this morning." He nearly slipped up when he was asked, "Why did the President order a resumption of the full-scale air activities over North Vietnam?" and didn't dispute the way the query was stated. When he was asked whether he meant to acknowledge that "we have resumed full-scale air activity against the North," he said that "I am not characterizing the activity at all. I am referring to my statement." His statement, part of a previous answer, was that "The actions . . . are designed to cope with another enemy buildup and to prevent yet another round of offensive actions by the enemy in the southern part of Vietnam." It also included assertions, echoing Henry Kissinger on the 16th, that "we stand ready to negotiate in a serious and constructive manner, to achieve the right kind of settlement," and that the right kind of settlement could be achieved whenever "the North Vietnamese make the decision to proceed in a constructive way and in the spirit of good will."

Ziegler's, meaning the President's, major and recurring theme on the 18th and at four subsequent press briefings in Washington and Florida was that "the actions" in North Vietnam reflected and expressed the policy stated by the President in a televised speech on May 8. This was the speech in which the President announced the mining of North Vietnamese harbors and intensified bombing in order to cut off Soviet and Communist Chinese supplies to North Vietnam. It was his response and counter to the invasion of South Vietnam which North Vietnam launched across the Demilitarized Zone on March 31. The May speech was relevant to the December situation and bombing only in the sense that the President had said that "these actions . . . will cease" when the North Vietnamese agree to return "all American prisoners of war" and to accept "an internationally supervised ceasefire throughout Indochina." Was he saying in December, through Ziegler, that the current and much more savage "actions" would cease only when the North Vietnamese signaled their readiness at least to discuss terms for a settlement that had been broadened well beyond the two conditions set forth in May? Indeed he was, without admitting that this was what he was saying. It was deemed more prudent, more acceptable to what remained of the popular conscience, to prate about frustrating a menacing and abnormal North Vietnamese military buildup. Perhaps because Washington and Saigon reporters with access to American intelligence officials found no evidence of such a buildup, the President (through Ziegler) modified the claim with talk of "a contingent buildup" and edged close to saying that the purpose of the bombing was to bludgeon the North Vietnamese into a suitably pliant mood and back to the conference table that they kept offering to return to if the President stopped the bombing. Thus Ziegler in Florida, December 21, referring to a reduction of the bombing in October: "The steps that we took between May 8 and now [*sic*] were steps that were taken because negotiations were proceeding in a constructive way. My announcement the other day [December 18], in which I told you that the May 8 policy is in effect because the North Vietnamese were not proceeding in their negotiations in a constructive way, I think was quite clear." Rightly interpreted, it was.

The Nixons dined at their Key Biscayne home with "Bebe" Rebozo on Christmas Eve and Christmas night. It was officially announced that Mr. and Mrs. Nixon "exchanged Christmas presents" on Christmas morning. It was not announced, but came out, that the President sold two Key Biscayne lots at a profit of around $100,000. After the return to Washington, the tributary flight to the Truman home, and the President's retirement into New Year silence, it fell to Jerry Warren (Ziegler being on holiday in California) to announce that the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong had been discontinued "as soon as it was clear that serious negotiations could be resumed."

John Osborne

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As Menemsha Neck Goes . . .

Saving the Land

Menemsha Neck is a slim little curve of sand dunes, bog and marsh which extends into a pond on Martha's Vineyard. Its several hundred acres of extraordinary beauty have assumed an importance beyond their size; what is happening to them will be noticed far from this small island off the Massachusetts coast. Unless citizens make a radical change in their approach to conservation, Menemsha Neck and thousands of other such places will be irretrievably lost in the next months, filled in, built upon, polluted and otherwise eroded by man.

The Neck represents an important natural resource, the coastal wetlands, one of the most fertile parts of the environment, essential to life in the ocean. Wetlands require some 10,000 years to build their delicate mechanisms; once destroyed they are permanently gone. Although coastal lands are only 12 percent of the US, a third of our population lives there and is increasing at almost double the rate of the rest of the country. It was not until this great rush to the shore started destroying wetlands that it became national policy to protect them. Menemsha Neck demonstrates how thunderously that policy has failed.

Here is a barrier beach sheltering shellfish grounds in the pond; it has bogs and salt marsh; it is a renowned rookery, almost the only one left in the northeast where the snowy egret nests along with gulls and black-crowned night herons. It contains the Cranberry Lands, which with Herring Pond and the Gay Head cliffs are the last of the Vineyard Indians' commonly owned lands which once embraced the entire island. These lands give the town of Gay Head, one of Massachusetts' two remaining Indian towns, and its celebrated sand spit a particular cultural and historical significance.

In 1960 there was an explosive dispute over putting a road through these dunes. Local shellfishermen and real estate interests lined up against conservationists; influential summer residents around the pond and other powerful Vineyard protectors brought Menemsha Neck to the attention of the secretary of Interior, both Massachusetts senators, congressmen, state officials. The battle was widely reported in the national press; it created the Vineyard Conservation Society; it required the intervention of the governor of the commonwealth to devise a solution.

The compromise was a mile-long state road of limited access which means you could not drive off of or onto it except at its ends. Except for this dark scar down its middle, the exquisite length of barrier beach should be kept in its natural state. That was the general consensus. No one thought then to question who would keep it that way. Now the question is asked but not answered.

Public protection of these vital lands is an almost impenetrable tangle of administrative buck-passing. The President's National Land Use Policy says the states should preserve areas of critical environmental concern and puts coastal zones first on the list. A federal law authorizes funds to help the states do the job in fiscal 1973, but so far, only a few have wetlands protection laws. Massachusetts is one which does and which is often cited as a model, although after nine years with such laws on the books it has only been able to put a third of its wetlands under state protection. It has just produced a new Coastal Wetlands Act which state house spokesmen say is more effective than its predecessors. But the new law may be passing the buck to the towns. It requires 10 ponderous steps to put land under restrictions, incorporating whatever is decided on into the deeds. The process of decision, it turns out, rests heavily on local sentiment. Because nobody on the Vineyard or elsewhere could say whether the state would or could preserve the wetlands if the town did not want to, I asked Massachusetts Governor Francis Sargent to interpret the state's powers. His answer is not yet available. "What your letter has done is to start off a comprehensive study of the Wetlands Act" the governor's aide said. "You've made the Menemsha Neck a test case without going to court." The governor hopes to reply early in the new year.

Meanwhile, back on the Menemsha Neck road, limited access regulations are forgotten and unenforced: "How could we patrol every such road in the state?" a commonwealth official asks. Jeeps and beach buggies swarm off the road and over the dunes. With the traffic came renewed interest in six privately held lots on the Neck, a total of some 38 acres. One lot changed hands and it is on its acres that the wetlands challenge is pinpointed.

Until the summer of 1972, the town of Gay Head, like much of the Vineyard, had no zoning, no planning, no particular aims and not much money, its 90 year-round residents subsisting on scalloping, real estate sales, tourist business in the summer, welfare in the winter. Developers were everywhere, land prices soared. Senator Kennedy's bill for a regional land plan for the island, introduced into Congress last April, slowed some developers, spurred others. If the bill is made a law, Menemsha Neck and other important natural resources on the Vineyard will be in a forever wild category which forbids any change whatsoever. While fiercely bitter argument about the bill raged, the six island towns hustled to pass zoning, appoint conservation commissions and otherwise move into a more contemporary land use position. All had a long way to go; Gay Head, smallest and poorest, was last in line.

Just before Gay Head passed its zoning law, one of the new landowners on the Neck, a local boat mechanic,

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announced his intention to build a boat repair shop and some summer rental houses. In October, as the state was about to start hearings on wetlands under its pristine new law, the boatman began building on the Neck, got as far as two house platforms, and after a skirmish of comically gigantic proportions which eventually required interference from the governor himself, was delivered a temporary cease and desist order from the state's department of natural resources for failing to get permission for his buildings.

The injunction is temporary. The boat repairman is angry and lets his neighbors know it. The Indians want to keep control of their part of the wetlands and may decide to build a tourist-attracting council lodge on the Neck. A Gay Head selectman told the state people that they had "no right to instigate action against these Cranberry Lands that are our heritage." If Gay Head does not want to keep its wild wetlands in their natural state, the commissioner of natural resources "may permit," the new law says, "construction of single family dwellings and camps . . ." which meet certain conditions. What he will do about the first would-be builder must be anybody's guess until Governor Sargent can interpret the law.

At this state of wild confusion, the boat repairman lets it be known that he will sell his two acres at approximately three times what he paid for them. The Vineyard Conservation Society considered a citizens' suit against the first despoiler on the Neck, then backed away; "No one wants to see his house or barn in flames" was the explanation. It now presses for a move to use Massachusetts' Self-Help Program which would combine public and private funds to enable the town to acquire the land. If the effort succeeds (which seems highly unlikely as no one knows how to appraise these lands and no one is anxious to displease the boatman with a too-low figure), it would only be meaningful if all the acres of Menemsha Neck were acquired, a process which would cost in the millions.

A radical change in approach is necessary. We need to put the federal presence on the island along with state and local authority, Senator Kennedy says. We need a fundamental realignment of power, according to Joseph Sax, highly regarded professor of environmental law; he believes that citizens must now take the initiative, must participate in the search for environmental quality by bringing every issue which needs solution to court, thus adding citizen power to bureaucrat power. Together these two concepts could bring objectivity, reason and hope to Menemsha Neck.

Anne W. Simon

MS. SIMON'S *book*, No Island Is an Island: The Ordeal of Martha's Vineyard, *will be published next spring by Doubleday.*

Four Years of Achievement and Failure

Nixon and the World

by Hans J. Morgenthau

Trying to evaluate the foreign policy of the Nixon administration during its first term, one must, as always in foreign policy, distinguish between rhetoric and policy. Rhetoric and policy may by and large coincide, one reflecting the other, or a wide gap may separate the two. In the latter case, what governments do is more important than what they say they are doing or are going to do. However, even here the kind of rhetoric used, in conjunction with the kind of policy pursued, can give a clue to the government's intention.

What is striking and new in the rhetoric of the first Nixon administration is the virtually complete absence of ideological argumentation, let alone crusading fervor. Gone is the division of the world into good and evil nations with the assurance that the good shall prevail. The administration does no longer argue that we have been fighting in Vietnam in order to "stop communism," but in order to prevent a government to be imposed upon the South by force of arms. The Nixon administration has achieved the precondition for a sound American foreign policy: general and

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complete ideological disarmament.

What is more important is the correspondence of its policies with its ideological indifference. It has dealt with Communist nations in a businesslike manner. That is true particularly of those nations with which the United States has had hostile relations of long standing: the Soviet Union and China. One can even argue that, as concerns manner, President Nixon went from the extreme of uncompromising ideological hostility to the other extreme of indiscriminate exuberant friendliness. One can raise the question as to whether President Nixon's trip to China was really necessary and whether the political results, of historic importance in themselves, could not have been achieved in a less spectacular manner.

There is a more general risk and an already visible tendency that those—and there are very many since this was not so long ago the official orthodoxy—who thought of our relations with Communist nations primarily, if not exclusively, in ideological terms will conclude that, since ideological differences are no longer politically important, nothing of importance stands between the United States and the Communist nations. Both attitudes miss the political point in the relations of nations. Yesterday's ideological cold warriors become today's political pacifists, in either incarnation misunderstanding what foreign policy is about. It is about the reconciliation of hostile, and the recognition and creation of common, interests.

Judged by this standard, President Nixon's policy toward China has four achievements to its credit and one failure to its debit. It has given up the position that the issue of Taiwan affects the legitimacy of the government of mainland China and has accepted the settlement of the issue by the two governments immediately concerned. In consequence, it has been able to begin the normalization of our relations with China, 20 years overdue. This process of normalization has broken down the wall of isolation which the United States erected and tried to maintain between China and other nations. That is to say, the latter's relations with China, too, are being normalized. Thus China has become an active factor in world politics, which has already affected the relations between the United States, on the one hand, North Vietnam, the Soviet Union and Japan, on the other. The ability of the United States to disengage from Vietnam has been facilitated by China's disengagement from all-out support of North Vietnam. The interest in a settlement, common to the United States and China, could be translated into policies conducive to a settlement.

China's entry into world politics as an important factor has also affected the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. It has provided the United States with a freedom of maneuver between the Soviet Union and China, playing upon their mutual fears and hostility and promising future advantages. The abatement of hostility between the United States and China has conjured up in the eyes of the Soviet Union the possibility of common Sino-American action. The Soviet Union, in order to forestall such a possibility which has haunted it for many years, must make concessions which otherwise it might not have been willing to make. The consequent improvement in Soviet-American relations, in turn, must disturb China which, in order to forestall closer cooperation between its two major enemies, must be ready to make concessions of its own. Thus we are here in the presence of a typical three-cornered balance-of-power situation in which the United States occupies a favored position as long as the Sino-Soviet conflict lasts.

Apart from this new three-cornered configuration, an understanding, the beginning of which can be traced back to the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, appears to exist between the United States and the Soviet Union to keep hands off their respective spheres of influence and, where they overlap, as they do in Indochina and the Middle East, to avoid not only a military confrontation but even coming close to one. The first Nixon administration has taken advantage of this understanding in these two areas. It has escalated drastically the Vietnam war in the air and on the sea without any reaction other than verbal from the Soviet Union, and it has through the same technique it used with regard to China—linkage between American trade and credit concessions with political concessions from the other side—enlisted the support of the Soviet Union for a settlement of the Vietnam war. In the Middle East, the first Nixon administration has supported the territorial status quo of 1967 by arming Israel for a war it could not lose while the Soviet Union armed its Arab allies for a war they could not win. In both areas the administration has been able to turn the understanding with the Soviet Union to its advantage.

While thus the beginning normalization of Sino-American relations has had a beneficial effect upon the interests of the United States, it has had a deleterious effect upon our relations with Japan. The repeated disregard for the interests and, more importantly, the prestige of Japan—entirely unnecessary in view of American interests—has seriously impaired Japan's confidence in, and sympathies for, the United States. Considering the key position Japan occupies in the balance of power among the United States, the Soviet Union and China, the United States has a vital interest in repairing its relations with Japan to prevent it from being absorbed in either the Soviet or Chinese sphere.

The beginning normalization of our relations with China has been the one great achievement of the first Nixon administration, unnecessarily paid for, it is true, by our alienation from Japan. The inability to end American involvement in the Vietnam war has been the one great failure of the first Nixon ad-

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ministration.

The complete disengagement from Vietnam, prepared by the withdrawal of virtually all American combat troops, has been delayed for reasons of personal and national prestige by four years. President Nixon received at the end of his first term somewhat more favorable conditions from North Vietnam than he could have obtained four years earlier. The concession, essentially the retention of President Thieu in power for the time being, has been paid for with 20,000 American lives and the destruction of the human and material resources of Vietnam, North and South, as well as of Cambodia and Laos on a scale that staggers the imagination. If one applies the traditional standards of just war—proportionality between the end sought and the means employed—to President Nixon's Vietnam policies, one can give him credit only—and very small and dubious credit it is—for having shifted the casualties from America to Vietnam.

In the field of nuclear arms control and disarmament, the issue dwarfing all others, the record of the first Nixon administration is extremely mixed. It is as though two contradictory impulses had moved it forward and held it back at the same time. On the one hand, reason tells it that an unlimited and proliferating nuclear arms race must end in catastrophe. Thus it undertakes SALT and agrees to the virtual abolition of ABMs and the regulated competition for offensive weapons. On the other hand, conventional but obsolete modes of thought and action as well as vested military and industrial interests tell it that the quantitative and qualitative nuclear arms race must continue for the sake of American security. Thus it refuses to extend the limited test ban treaty to underground tests, whose nonintrusive control is technically feasible, and it insists upon testing multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs) and making them operational on a large scale, thereby putting a probably insuperable obstacle in the path of SALT II; for while missiles armed with a single warhead are susceptible to nonintrusive control, MIRVs are not.

History may well record that the two most fateful mistakes the United States committed since the end of World War II were President Johnson's refusal in 1968 to start SALT because of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia—punishing not only the Soviet Union but also the United States for the Soviet transgression—when MIRVs had not yet been tested, and President Nixon's decision to test MIRVs and make them operational. These two decisions may well have foreclosed the possibility of a meaningful nuclear arms control and disarmament agreement.

The first Nixon administration can take no credit for the normalization and, one might even say, pacification of Central Europe brought about by the treaties West Germany concluded with the Soviet Union, Poland and East Germany. While Chancellor Brandt's *Ostpolitik* was not openly opposed by Washington, it was certainly not encouraged with any degree of enthusiasm, if it was encouraged at all. This attitude of indifference has extended from Germany to all of Western Europe. The attention and energies of the first Nixon administration have been absorbed by Vietnam, and it has preferred the spectacular *coup de théâtre* to the patient day-by-day building of new relationships to replace obsolescent ones. Since our relations with Western Europe require exactly this kind of unobtrusive diplomatic spade work, they have been neglected. When the administration, because of the dollar crisis, could not help paying attention to Western Europe, it dispatched its secretary of the Treasury to exact through brutal tactics some temporary economic advantage without any regard for the long-range political and military interests such tactics might impair. It remains to be seen if the trips to Western Europe President Nixon plans for his second term will be followed by the overdue reconstruction of our political, military and economic relations.

The record of the first Nixon administration is also negative with regard to the United Nations. It is, of course, obvious that many of the weaknesses of the United Nations are beyond the control of the United States, being the result of its constitutional structure and of the policies of other member states. But it ought also to be obvious that the general decline of the United Nations, both in its activities and its prestige, results from the disdain and neglect with which it is treated by the major powers, of which the United States is one. That disdain has been unabashedly expressed in President Nixon's choice of his ambassador to the United Nations. Once we sent senators, a Supreme Court justice, and a former presidential candidate of Adlai Stevenson's distinction to represent us at the United Nations. It is no reflection on Mr. Scali's merits as a journalist to state that obviously he is not in the class of his predecessors.

The paralysis of the Security Council has been primarily the result of the Cold War which found the United States and the Soviet Union frequently on opposite sides of the issues. The improvement in Soviet-American relations could well be reflected in cooperation in the Security Council insofar as the interests of the United States and the Soviet Union coincide or can be reconciled. The first Nixon administration has initiated bi- and multilateral cooperation with the Soviet Union and other nations on behalf of the common exploration of space and protection and restoration of the natural environment. But it has not used the opportunities which might have presented themselves for political cooperation within the United Nations.

Thus while the overall record of the foreign policy of the first Nixon administration has been mixed, its initiatives have drastically changed American relations with the Soviet Union and China. It is probably not

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too hazardous a premature historic judgment to say that it has opened a new chapter in American foreign policy and in world politics in general. That judgment is likely to remain true even if these initiatives should prove to be merely spectacular in their immediate effects rather than lasting in their consequences.

If the latter should turn out to be the case, world politics might well revert to the pattern which both Roosevelt and Stalin envisaged when World War II drew to a close: a condominium of the super powers, each respecting the sphere of influence of the other and both either keeping out of conflicts between third powers or cooperating in settling them. If and when China has become a super power itself, it might well join such a government of the world.

Such a world government by the super powers would be a far cry from the government by the great powers which followed the Napoleonic Wars under the leadership of Metternich. For that government tried to preserve and restore the legitimacy of Christian conservative governments, which the Napoleonic order had temporarily impaired and which did not survive the liberal revolutions of 1848. Not even the semblance of common principles of legitimacy exists today in which the super powers could find moral and political standards for common political action.

Yet two principles, derived from the distribution of power in the contemporary world, have taken the place of the missing principles of legitimacy: the inability to make their will prevail over most nations of the second and third rank and the certainty of total destruction in case of war between them. Total destruction has taken the place of the primary enemy, and it is the enemy of all, more particularly, the super powers. The awareness of these two principles has already called forth unprecedented restraint in their relations with each other and with nations of the second and third rank. If this restraint should continue to dominate the relations of the super powers, we would be in the presence of the paradox of the stability of the great-power relations in an unstable world.

However, regardless of whether its initiative will have such long-range results, the first Nixon administration has completely failed in that task, peculiarly American, without whose achievement successes in foreign policy will remain in the long run but hollow victories: to restore those exemplary qualities of America where throughout its history the lasting roots of its powers have lain. America no longer sets an example for other nations to emulate; in many respects it sets an example of what to avoid. We are feared because a nation which is capable of doing what we have been doing to Vietnam appears to be capable of anything; but we are no longer admired for what we are capable of doing. We are no longer looked upon as different from other nations. In the eyes of the world and in our own we have become a nation like all the others, perhaps even worse than some because our great power is at the service of intentions that are so good, and in consequence the use of our power is so lacking in restraint.

What is true of the relations between America and the rest of the world has also become true of the relationship between the American government and its citizens. Contemplating the American scene in these pages in 1967, I pointed to "the disarray of foreign and domestic policies, the violence from above and below, the decline of the public institutions, the disengagement of the citizens from the purposes of the government, the decomposition of those ties of trust and loyalty that link citizen to citizen and the citizens to the government" as the ailments of America. Far from curing these ailments, the first Nixon administration has greatly aggravated them and may well have rendered them incurable except by undemocratic means. "A society threatened with disruption or disintegration," I wrote, "can maintain itself in two ways: through a creative effort at reconstruction or through violent repression. The former is the democratic way, of which America and modern England provide examples. The other is the fascist way through which Germany, Italy, and Spain maintained themselves as integrated societies. Yet these examples show that the two choices are available only in the initial stages of the crisis, that is, when the powers-that-be are tempted to close their eyes to the potential seriousness of the crisis. Once the destructive results of disruption and disintegration have become obvious, it is likely to be too late for democratic remedies. There is, then, an element of tragedy in such a crisis of democratic society: When it could still be saved by democratic measures of reconstruction, there appears to be no need for them, and when the need has become obvious, it is too late for them."

In the vital area of the imponderables of moral leadership, of the reconstruction of disintegrating society, of the restoration of trust between citizen and citizen and citizen and government, the first Nixon administration has been an utter failure. Having failed in that creative task, President Nixon in his second term will be tempted to rely on the other remedy available to governments which must keep together a society threatening to fall apart: repression.

Thus what the first Nixon administration has been able to achieve in foreign policy may well be negated by what it was unable to achieve in the domestic sphere. For what will it avail an America that is no longer dedicated to the ideal of equality in freedom and, in consequence, has lost its soul, if it will be able to improve its relations with nation A and prevent a revolution in nation B? In the long perspective of history these successes will then be like the defense or the conquest of a province by a Roman emperor: footnotes to the history of the decline and fall of a once great nation.

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Language, Literature and Unemployment

What Matters to the MLA

by Doris Grumbach

The Modern Language Association is an 89-year-old society of college and university teachers of English and foreign languages, the largest such learned group in the United States. Prestigious and devoted since its inception to sound if sometimes stodgy scholarship, the association began as a small, gentlemanly, elite group of teachers dedicated to the study of English, modern languages and literature at a time when none of these was fashionable as an academic discipline. James Russell Lowell, one of the few presidents without a Ph.D. to preside over the association, held a four-year term from 1887 to 1891; those who succeeded him were elevated to the presidency because of their accomplishments in scholarship. They ruled as constitutional monarchs, benign, revered, ineffectual. Their constituencies, professors and instructors, were in the main, in the American Anglo-Saxon tradition. Their students, of similar caste, were by custom silent, hard-working, upper class and in awe of "the civilizing influence of literature."

Now the association has 30,000 members, publishes a scholarly journal *(PMLA)* which reaches 35,000 subscribers, and has, under its aegis, been responsible for the publication of 100 volumes (definitive editions, they are called) of major 19th-century American authors. But its major product is a massive yearly meeting, a four-day, post-Christmas gathering of colleagues, job-seekers, old classmates and drinking companions, in large cities across the country (New York and Chicago are the major ones). Here they listen to papers, discuss subjects of interest to the profession, and hold what was irreverently once called a slave market and now has been renamed, euphemistically, the Job Information Service.

The history and present condition of MLA is typical of most scholarly and professional organizations in recent years, and its annual meeting is repeated in detail at the meetings of such groups as the American Historical Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Philosophical Society, the American Library Association, and the rest. For most of these, 1968 was the year of interior revolution in which the orderly confines of the annual meeting were disrupted by groups of dissidents, calling themselves by various "alternative" titles—in MLA they were the New University Conference—who set up literature tables in hotel halls, distributed mimeographed literature challenging the elitist basis for existence of the societies of which they were members, and rose up before the microphones of hitherto soporific business meetings to demand that members take a stand against the war, the repression of the Black Panthers, the lack of social ethics among intellectuals, the absence of a sense of society's wrongs: racism, poverty, social injustice.

That year MLA, like the others, was severely shaken. Louis Kampf, professor of literature at MIT, who was, in the course of the radical action, to be propelled into the presidency of the association by 1970 (he too without a Ph.D.) was arrested by the New York City police as he attempted to put up a poster which read: "The tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction" on the walls of the hotel. At the meeting's end, the traditionally deadly business meeting was transformed into an eight-hour marathon during which a "radical caucus" introduced resolutions on social issues which would, in effect, have politicized the scholarly group. The fight raged into the night, the only concession the old-guard conservatives managed to effect was the decision to send the resolutions (passed at the activist-attended meeting) to the whole membership where, of course, their fate was almost certainly to be reversed. It was painfully clear, as I wrote at the time, that never again was the conservative MLA totally to escape the effects of its own tigers of wrath.

Two weeks ago in New York 9000 members gathered in the posh, gilt-edged rooms and corridors of the Hilton and the Americana. Now, four years after the attempts to unsettle, restructure and indeed, evaluate the very need for the existence of MLA, it was possible to assess the effects of the rebellion of 1968 and to weigh the shock waves felt from it in the years since.

The shape and thinking of the association has been affected—but not profoundly. In the introduction to his book, *The Politics of Literature*, Louis Kampf wrote: "never has more literary criticism been written, yet the civilizing function historically imputed to it has been withering away; more students are 'taking' literature, yet the reading of books seems mostly irrelevant to their lives; the literary professions have never been larger or wealthier, yet teaching and criticism seem often to have become instruments of oppression rather than of enlightenment." Yet this year's program contained notice of more than 200 papers on such subjects as "Non-Organic Patterns in the Evolution of Latin pl, bl, and fl, into Italo-Romance," and "Further Thoughts

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on the Limited Duration of the Love Potion in Beroul's *Tristan*." No longer were the business meeting or the radical-caucus gatherings the popular events of the convention. Few signs were mounted on the walls of the meeting corridors. Beards, it is true, are almost *de rigueur* for the literature professor, but the blue-shirted, long-haired graduate students handing out flyers were nowhere to be seen. No echoes of Louis Kampf's thesis that the very concept of culture "is rooted in social elitism" sounded at these gatherings. Instead the best attended meetings were on film and popular culture, on figures of the romantic 19th century, on American literature and the problems of textbook publishing. The Melville Society attracted a half-page in *The New York Times* by enlivening its usually theoretical approach to its author by an excursion to the South Street Maritime Museum, and a little group of earnest reformers met to propose the formation of a forum at MLA for "glotto-politics"—in order to solve the coming communications crisis by the adoption of Esperanto as a world language. It is safe to say that the tenor of this gathering was closer to the remarks of Rene Wellek, the eminent French scholar beside whom I sat at the 1968 business and watched his benign face redden with fury, who wrote in *The American Scholar* this winter that "the political attack on literature is a foolish generalization." It was apparent last month that the political attack on the profession of teaching literature and scholarly research had failed, at least among its own professed, not because it was foolish but because it had failed to gain any *lebensraum* among those to whom it was directed.

And if further proof were needed, it could be found in the urbane final address of this year's association president, Stuart Atkins, which took a literate, cosmopolitan and uncompromising stand:

> Intellectual enthusiasm—whether for transformational grammar, Dickens, existentialism, Goethe's *Faust*, or even Augustan satire—is preferable to darkness and bitterness . . . As the expression of professional competence it is perhaps, more than anything else, what we are best qualified to communicate to others.
>
> Knowledge of language or literature may not be *the* answer to life's problems, may not be the best instrument for creating utopian perfection, may not be the magic threshold to a life of perfected self-culture, but it can be an important means of recognizing where problems lie and action is needed.

The general meeting, at which these reasoned and often witty remarks were spoken, was not without reminiscent activity. The Program Committee had invited Nixon's new appointee to the National Endowment for the Humanities, Dr. Ronald Berman, to address the meeting. Among the academic persons whose hatred of the war had been fanned by the recent bombings, this was a deeply political move. The Radical Caucus responded by a silent, effective (some felt, tasteless) and disturbing protest. As Berman rose to deliver his laudatory speech about the achievement in recent years of his grant-dispersing group, there appeared around the edges of the Hilton's Grand Ballroom activists bearing crudely lettered signs which they held aloft through the address. They read: *Endowment for In-Humanities, Endowment Bankrupt for Genocide* and other similar sentiments, one accusing Berman of having urged Ronald Reagan to crack down on students. Like passive Bartlebys, the activists (including former president Kampf) stood until the end, impassive in their silence while a collection was made for medical aid to Hanoi. At the end, incoming association president Florence Howe invited the audience to remain to hear an unscheduled speaker (but one approved unanimously by the executive council the night before), poet Muriel Rukeyser, who had just returned from a visit to North Vietnam.

All the speakers at this point left the platform, including the association's competent executive secretary, William Schaefer, President Atkins, and host university president William McGill of Columbia. Muriel Rukeyser gave a touching, impassioned report, urging the by-now decimated gathering to send books and medicines to Hanoi. It was significant that, to start with, this was the smallest meeting to hear a presidential address in recent memory and that, of that group, only less than a third remained for the "political" and humanitarian aftermath. It was also noticed that, in gentlemanly fashion, Professor Atkins who, at the meeting of the executive council the evening before had said he would not deliver his address if Miss Rukeyser was placed, as requested, first on the program (purely on the grounds that such an unscheduled inclusion would make a political event of what he conceived to be a scholarly one), sat in the audience among the small number who remained to listen.

The meeting of the delegate assembly, a newly created body of 200 elected persons formed after the shambles of the 1968 meeting to prevent floor outbursts and to give a feeling of democracy to MLA governance, was relatively untroubled. Advisory in its nature to the staff and salaried executives and the executive council of the association, the delegates passed a budget report critical of the allotment of budget funds and of the allocation of administrative salaries for the central staff. Passing six innocuous resolutions, among them one which lauded the committee on its arrangements for the convention, it never got to the controversial ones about the war, the bombings, the participation of academicians in the antiwar demonstrations scheduled for January 20 in Washington. The nine-hour sesssion left these matters on the table, ironically, until next year.

If the political effect of the radicals on the meetings

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was limited to an almost-deserted table of literature, a few leaflets, and a small meeting at which papers such as "The Problem of Shakespeare for Marxist Criticism" were presented, there was a real and noticeable effect of the '68 revolution at this year's meeting: the omnipresent and bountiful presence of the feminist movement. Every day, almost at any hour, one could attend meetings of the women's caucus, or the official MLA commission on the status of women, hear papers on women writers and women as characters, listen to poignant histories of the sad state of women in the profession of college teaching, and participate in seminars on such subjects as Colette, Doris Lessing and yes, it is true, "Menstruation and Literature."

At the Job Rap for women, facts were aired which supported the need for reform in this area. Despite federal action, state action, and the pressing need for affirmative action in the fair and equal hiring of women for college teaching, it is still true that:

► Discrimination by sex is widely practiced in the profession.

► 58 percent of the graduate students in English are women but, ultimately, only seven to eight percent of those who achieve full professorial rank are.

► An undetermined but nonetheless horrifying number of qualified women Ph.D.s are job hunting, waiting out their hiring by being on welfare, scrubbing floors or teaching grade school. Others—and again the number is not known—have gone through the revolving door, and out of the profession entirely.

► Women habitually receive less pay than men for equal work, and have far less chance of being tenured. What happens to the sixth-year woman who is then denied tenure is not known, but it is the condition of many.

► 30 percent of the membership of MLA is female, but almost all department chairmen are male, and are suspected by female applicants of being biased, a condition, or a state of mind, almost impossible to prove.

► Activist women in the profession take their academic lives in their hands when they act politically for their own interests and those of their "sisters." Recent history discloses that they are the first fired and the last to be offered jobs and tenure.

► There is a reluctance on the part of colleges and universities to hire wives of their faculty members on a full-time basis.

► Dossiers of women applicants often contain prejudicial letters indicating information on matters which women consider either immaterial (their looks, personality, marital status, number of children, etc.) or prejudicial.

► Women are usually found in the lower ranks of academia, rarely rise to full professorships or administration. Once there, however, they tend to be the "token" woman, hired in order to satisfy federal requirements.

► Women who enter the profession late (many get their doctorates after the work of bearing and raising children is over) are discriminated against because of age or lack of publications.

► Sometimes unqualified women are hired purposely so that their unsuitability for their jobs will make generalizations about further hiring of women easy.

Not all the iterated and reiterated complaints went unanswered, however. John Hunt Fisher, former executive secretary and now on his way to being MLA president, claims that the women's movement in the profession is in itself elitist (led by wives of ivy-league professors who wish to work in those same places). He further notes that only 10 percent of the women given grants to do doctoral work finish their degrees; 60 to 70 percent of the males finish, thus leading to some understandable hesitancy about hiring qualified women for jobs who may be under the same pressures to follow their husbands, have babies and so forth. And many objectors to the new feminine militancy in the profession note that the whole profession is now suffering from economic depression and no jobs for males as well as females, so no discrimination is really at work in the selection process. There are no jobs for *anyone*.

The year to come for MLA will be interesting. Activist Florence Howe, the third woman to be president (and the first without her doctorate) represents the new vocal tradition, the nonscholarly activist, chosen by an electorate who expects real change in the nature of the association. Because she is an intelligent and forceful woman, she may succeed in making her demands heard by the stolid male hierarchy, and her influence felt for greater political social awareness and action among the scholars. But it remains to be seen if she can, any more than Louis Kampf was able to do a few years ago, change the direction of this oldest of academic societies. There is no doubt that the anger of the tigers of feminism will not be stilled until justice is done to women members, but there is considerable doubt that the broad, calm clearing in the academic jungle which is the traditional scholarly domain will soon again be seriously invaded and threatened by the wild activist-beasts.

Oh yes, the women and menstruation seminar. Startling as it looked on the program, it turned out to be a serious set of papers on the number of times menarche and the feminine reproductive phenomenon had been mentioned in literature, as well as the delineation of some assumptions of male prejudice against it, and the taboos surrounding it. It is rarely, as Emily Toth pointed out, just menstrual blood. "It is usually a sign for the author's and characters' attitudes toward women: menstruation may lead to hating, demystifying, or desiring to consume, but it is never greeted with indifference."

Ah, for the Olympian and dispassionate calm of a consideration of the Latin pl, bl and fl!

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Stanley Kauffmann on films

Jeremiah Johnson
(Warner Bros.)

Traffic
(Columbia)

The Heartbreak Kid
(Twentieth Century-Fox)

"The strong silent man," wrote Lincoln Kirstein in 1932, "is the heir of the American pioneer, the brother of Daniel Boone whom James Fenimore Cooper immortalized as the American type for Europe." Although the type has since been metamorphosed, occasionally, into gangster or private eye or even hospital surgeon, the original remains a constant, and he gets a good reincarnation in *Jeremiah Johnson*. Robert Redford's new film is about the strongest and silentest of the lot, the mountain man of the Rockies, in the first half of the 19th century. He was strong or else he died; he was silent because, for months on end, he was alone.

The well-made script is by John Milius and Edward Anhalt, based on a Vardis Fisher novel and a story by Raymond W. Thorp and Robert Bunker. Redford, in the title role, is an ex-soldier of the Mexican War who is weary of the "civilized" world and wants a natural life. He arrives at a frontier post, buys some equipment, and, with minimal knowledge, rides west to trap for furs. In the mountains he meets an old-timer who gives him valuable advice; joins up for a while with another trapper; escorts the surviving son of a family butchered by Indians; and for a time has an Indian bride who is herself butchered by another tribe; yet, despite these companions, the effect is of a solo odyssey.

Through the last portion of the story, Redford tracks the Crows who murdered his wife and the boy, kills many of them, survives many fights, and becomes a quasi-legendary figure to the Crow tribe. The last moment is a weary truce between him and a Crow chief: they accept him as a figure apparently under divine protection, and he, his vengeance satisfied, accepts life as it is. That is the (tacit) bromidic resolution—a man can't escape the world by fleeing to the mountains. But the strength of *Jeremiah Johnson* is not in its homiletic theme but in its execution, which is its real theme. This is a gritty, windy, weather-filled recreation of the mountain man's life.

Photographed in Utah by Duke Callaghan, the film creates a sense of space so large that it is comfortable. (The interior of Madison Square Garden is impressive as space; the Rocky Mountains just exist.) The seasons are what you wear and live in, the ground is where you sleep. The transformation occurs early because of the way places are seen, the tempo that is struck, and the movement and address of Redford who, except for his modern-day speech, is very solid in his role.

Freeze is freeze, massacre is massacre. (A surviving maddened white wife is well done by Allyn Ann McLerie.) When Redford gets himself in a fix because of etiquette and has to accept the gift of an Indian wife, she really looks like an Indian girl, not a starlet done up brown by Max Factor.

Almost, this is a rock-hard picture. There are some soft spots. Sydney Pollack, who directed fairly well, insists on making his presence felt from time to time: a handheld-camera episode at the beginning, a "picturesque" pull-back from a burial on a hilltop, some zooming into and back from three trapped wagons. It takes austerity to make the camera "invisible," particularly in historical pictures, as Bergman did in *The Virgin Spring*. Will Geer, as the old trapper, is an arrantly professional sage; and (coincidence?) his dialogue contains the one pulp word, repeated often: he keeps calling Redford "pilgrim." Some of the incidents, like Redford's survival of a spear in the guts, take us to Movieland. And the songs on the soundtrack are terrible.

But there is much in this picture to relish, like a quiet ride through a Crow burial ground that profanes the place, like Redford's stumbling on a frozen-stiff trapper, like the daily business of trapping, like the spacious silence.

I've never been a wild enthusiast of Jacques Tati, but *Traffic* is the best of his three films that I know. His Mr. Hulot (a name made differently famous by Balzac) is not a character but a clown-profile, so his films are arrangements in comic decor and observation rather than thoroughly engaging stories. But the arrangements are done with delicacy and wit, and *Traffic* has more sense of conclusiveness to it than his other pictures. Gags pay off better than they have usually done, and his customary anti-technology theme has more freshness here.

This time Mr. Hulot is a Parisian auto designer. He takes his latest model to an international auto show in Amsterdam, accompanied by a mechanic and a swinging PR girl. Because of accidents, they arrive after the show has closed. Auto troubles dot this story of auto madness.

Many of the sequences are neatly funny. At the start, the huge exhibition

(continued on page 33)

Films Worth Seeing

Chloe in the Afternoon. Eric Rohmer's sixth Moral Tale concludes his series of gentle, esthetic insistences that there is more to love and sex than modernist reductions.

The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie. The New old Buñuel slyly slices open his favorite victims with diabolic wit to reveal—us.

The Emigrants. Max von Sydow and Liv Ullman in a well-made narrative of Swedes leaving Sweden for the US in 1844.

The Ruling Class. Peter O'Toole and a superb cast in a messy but well-written satire about a religious maniac who succeeds to an earldom.

La Salamandre. A funny, grave, important film. Two TV documentary writers want to write a script about a workingclass girl, but her reality is too much for them. Swiss, believe it or not.

The Sorrow and the Pity. Four and a half fine hours of documentary about wartime France and some survivors.

Why. Nanni Loy directs the excellent Alberto Sordi as a man who plunges, through judicial error, into the seven circles of Italian prison hell. Forget concocted horror films; this is real horror. SK

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Robert Brustein on theater

Subjects of Scandal and Concern

London

John Arden and his wife, Margaretta D'Arcy, have denounced the Royal Shakespeare Company production of their play, *The Island of the Mighty*, and set up a two-person picket line outside the stage door of the Aldwych. The cause of this unprecedented strike action, according to the Ardens, is that the RSC, being a theater subsidized by a Tory government in order to "cultivate bourgeois society on a consumer level," has staged "an anti-imperialist play so that it glorifies imperialism." When the Ardens called for a company meeting in order to communicate their feelings to the cast, and the director, David Jones, refused, the authors repudiated the production, reported the situation to the press, and started writing out their picket boards ("Playwrights Are Workers Before They Are Artists! Organize British Playwrights' Trade Union Now!!").

Stung by charges that they are dictatorial imperialists and labor exploiters, David Jones and Trevor Nunn, the directors of the RSC, issued their own statement in the form of a letter to the *Times*. In this, they denied all accusations, asserting that Arden had seemed perfectly happy with his production until his wife saw the first runthrough, and reminding everyone that the RSC is a "basically leftwing organization" which has produced such politically okay authors as David Mercer, Mrozek, Gorky, Brecht and Gunter Grass (no apologies have yet been offered for such political infidels as T. S. Eliot, Harold Pinter or William Shakespeare). The affair reached its climax, according to Jones, when the Ardens leaped onstage during a preview and Miss D'Arcy started pulling apart the scenery. Although Mr. Jones begged for tolerance, the audience roundly booed Mr. Arden when he tried to speak from the stage, and the two unhappy authors left the theater only after Miss D'Arcy had landed a kick on the anatomy of Mr. Jones.

I mention all this because there is more insight into human folly (not to mention sheer entertainment value) in this ridiculous broil than in the entire London season so far; and there is more drama in that kick than in all four hours of *The Island of the Mighty*. I have no doubt that the controversy will have a sequel, given Mr. Jones' willingness to turn the other cheek; but as one whose own buttocks have recently been put to an arduous test, I am now obliged to drop the controversy and turn to the play. Let me begin by saying that the Ardens are perfectly right to criticize the production: it is elephantine, romantic and overproduced. But since the play is waterlogged, rhetorical and overwritten, I believe it to be the production that the play deserves. I must say, too, that I am baffled by all these references to imperialism. In his program notes, Mr. Arden goes on at length about Third World Homers and how the early history of Britain foreshadows 20th-century turbulence. But perhaps because the play was written well before his recent commitment to overthrowing oppressors, it has about as much relevance to modern politics as a pantomine historical pageant, which it often resembles.

To be sure, the play was recently revised, reportedly from the standpoint of ideological correctness, but aside from some talk in its opening moments about the North Sea herring trade, it contains little of political or economic significance. The authors have turned to The Matter of Britain—which is the name for the extremely sparse information about the historical Arthur (a much more shadowy figure than you find in Malory, Tennyson or T. H. White)—and used it as a basis for a lot of derring-do among the Romanized Celts, the savage Picts and the blond invaders from the Germanic countries called the English. This results in an endless series of alliances, battles, tactics, strategies, subterfuges, rapes and murders, all performed to the accompaniment of clanking armor, gruff delivery, perspective scenic screens and monotonous songs. Perhaps in consequence of a mistaken reading of Brecht, mere incident has been substituted for plot, while ritual ceremonies and mythic noises take the place of personal revelations. The play, in short, is almost entirely public; and aside from Arthur's momentary confession that "I'm feeling more cheerful than I was," and a brief intrigue between Gwenhwyvar (Guenevere) and Medraut (Mordred), there is almost nothing recognizably human in the evening.

What have the Ardens proved by this media tempest? That subsidized theaters are imperialist? No, merely that it is easy to make their liberal directors feel guilty. That playwrights are workers before they are artists? No, rather that they cease to be artists when they pretend to be workers. That (as one of the play's characters puts it) "the poets alone can prevent catastrophe"? No, only that poets are capable of the same violent behavior as anyone else. Most of all, they have proved that good theaters begin to decline when they choose plays for political rather than artistic reasons; and that people who claim both the rewards of the system and the purity of a radical conscience serve not to overthrow society but merely to entertain it with newspaper gossip.

There was only a very small scandal connected with the previews of John Osborne's *A Sense of Detachment* (Royal Court), having to do with the audience's reaction to some pornographic material, so if I may be permitted to paraphrase one of the author's earlier titles, it is for me less a subject of scandal than of concern. The playwright is here content merely to throw six unrelated characters together on the stage, and with a surprising lack of his customary elegaic wit, let them carry his opinions on such topics as women's liberation, romantic love, sexual slavery and the Irish troubles. The form of the evening is meant to remind one of Pirandello, but these six characters are less in search of an author than of a play. The scene is a bare theater, decorated only with a piano, a barrel organ, a movie screen and (more aptly) a pulpit, while the characters behave as if at an office party, singing, orating, reciting limericks, quarreling, dancing and reading aloud—interrupted only by a completely arbitrary interval, and, whenever the rhetorical inspiration flags (which is often) by two hecklers planted in the audience.

The interest of the play lies in its investigation of the boundaries between theater and reality, but I don't need to tell you that this is all pretty familiar territory by now. Worse, Mr. Osborne's writing is too studied and Frank Dunlop's production too frozen to provide the events with anything but an agonizing pretense at spontaneity. The two hecklers, for example—one, a working-class stiff, the other an outraged

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bourgeois—are obviously paid actors spotlighted by specials which have been set, focused, and gelled during technical rehearsals; and the play is never permitted to break out of its dialogue into free improvisation. Then, about a fifth of the evening (20 minutes) is devoted to a reading of English poetry juxtaposed with erotic materials. This has a certain initial impact in its ironic-sentimental conjunction of sacred and profane love, but it goes on too long to maintain any surprise. In short, *A Sense of Detachment* is a bit of a starveling. It shows us Mr. Osborne's Muse in a suspended state—punchy, boozy, wry and a little apologetic—tapping her foot while waiting for inspiration to flow.

Crawford Woods on TV

Tube Tap II

"Our-network-schedule-for-the-coming-season-is-designed-to-offer-programs-of-appeal-to-the-full-range-of-television-viewers-it-reflects-ABC's-commitment-to-broaden-television's-program-approaches-and-to-bring-its-audiences-a-varied-balanced-and-high-quality-schedule-of-entertainment."

These robot comments were probably never meant for recycling save in the pages of small-town papers starved for filler, so perhaps it's cruel to quote them; but I do so with no more blame than I'd blame snow for being cold. They are a political statement by James Duffy, president of ABC television, or more likely by one of his speechwriters. Analyzed against the backdrop of some of the network's product, they are a fair index of what ails broadcast television and even of what might cure it.

The key phrases are "full range of viewers" and "broadened program approaches"; the rest is cant. Sometimes, struggling through an evening with the network, I'm tempted to write off the other words as well, but there are hints here and there of a true quest for a broadcast alternative to alternative television.

Example: "The Streets of San Francisco," a new dramatic series. Since it's not about a doctor, it's about a cop, which sounds flat enough, but the night I watched, the episode rang convincing changes on the abuses of patriarchical power on both sides of the law, and even performed the signal service of alerting the viewer-as-citizen to a consumer con game. And the hill city showed up lovely on film as ever, yet somehow avoided being thrust under our noses as a substitute for story. Karl Malden is right in his role and Kirk Douglas' son Michael adequate in his and the show is not soporific.

This business of putting movie stars in a series began last season as a retreat from the doomed "relevance" drive of the season before that, which courted a young audience and only lost an older one. Economic necessity was probably at its root—Hollywood was having a hard time—so Anthony Quinn and Henry Fonda showed up as TV regulars for the first time in their long careers—the latter on ABC as center of "The Smith Family," *another* police beat and a strikingly pointed reproach to wayward offspring Peter and Jane. Interesting, how these generations of movie household words are taking each other on, on television.

Television is also taking on the movies in a very big way. This season, the ABC "Sunday Night Movie" has shown *Patton*, five-letter words intact, and will air *Lawrence of Arabia*, *True Grit*, *Z*, and so forth, fairly new films traveling in the wake of a wide reputation. The effort again is to capture a young audience, and this time it's likely to succeed; but, again, film frankness may offend some hardcore TV viewers just as the medium's skirmish with the real world turned them off two years ago.

What's developing is nothing less than a new evolutionary stage of commercial television that could be a vigorous one (unless the man in the White House moves yet more decisively to clean things up).

Twenty years ago, family-oriented TV drove feature films out of business as mass entertainment, forcing them to upgrade themselves into fare for a sophisticated narrow public; now, seeking a young audience (where the money is), TV reruns the films that that audience has already underwritten at the box office, thus bringing back to the small screen "adult" material that TV shows have historically been reluctant to handle; and consequently forcing those shows toward timid breakthroughs in areas the films long ago accomplished. Which doesn't imply an automatic improvement in quality. Junk decked out with up-to-date abortions, homosexuals, dope, prostitution, bigotry and pungent speech is still junk. But it is, at least, a little less removed from social reality. Hence a little closer to sanity. The smiling, white, untroubled on-screen faces that gave our lives the lie for more than 20 years will never be back.

ABC deserves some of the credit for this, whatever its mercenary motives; credit also for shaking up the structure of late-night TV, though it has done so at the cost of one of its own best programs.

The network has been plugging several things into the moribund Dick Cavett time-slot, including a comedy series called "Madhouse 90," one called "Comedy News," and a handful of rock specials under the heading "In Concert." Given the special place Cavett fills for the few viewers who, when they watch a talk show at all, would watch no other, these newcomers have to be judged not only on their own merits but against the occasional charm of the program they replace.

Cavett has long been billed as the (check one) thinking man's/alternative/civilized/intellectual talk show host, encomiums which never altogether pleased him and positively alarmed the network. When I interviewed him two years ago, he pressed hard the point that he was just another entertainer, Jack Paar's stepson. But by and large he has been helplessly better than his own PR. And the better he got, the more he was doomed to lose some audience. Hence ABC's attempts to patch the hole from post-prime time to midnight with the ventures mentioned above.

Of the three, the rock shows are perhaps the weakest, not because they're bad specimens of their kind, but because their kind doesn't work very well on television. Nevertheless, "In Concert" has improved on the share of audience for ABC in that time period and excited mews of gratitude from the kids, so it may be a survivor. The first show was jerked off the air in mid-concert because the president of Taft Broadcasting there took offense. The official was quoted, "It had stopped being music and art and turned into pornography. I saw no reason to continue it." It wasn't music or art to begin with,

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a good enough reason not to continue it, but this unilateral censorship sits ill.

"Comedy News"—on its own or stacked against its victim—is a lot more successful. It has been running 60 and 90 minutes, several days in a row, which is a dumb way to overplay the material. Not even the able people who do the show can be that funny that often. The peg is straightforward enough: rampant idiocy is presented in the guise of a legitimate news format, with skits and reports centered mostly on politics, space race, race and pop culture. The three nights I watched, the show struck a smooth balance between torpor and genuine humor. Particularly good were Mort Sahl as a Washington correspondent describing the fruit salad on a general's chest ("All of which is very impressive. If you're 12."); Anthony Holland as culture-critic on a new film *(The Godmouse)* and interviewing an artist who paints mostly Joe Namath ("Dude Descending A Staircase"); Stan Freberg talking with a moonman (editor of a moonpaper called *The Sun);* Richard Pryor on Nixon ("By the end of his term he's gonna want all blacks to be knee-grows."); and an anchorman who pulls the whole thing together with a chilling Paul Harvey imitation: love it or leave it. A fine surprise is a demented weather girl, and best of all, Bob and Ray.

There's a further word of praise to be tossed to "Comedy News." At a time when the administration has broadcasting running scared with not-so-veiled threats of license denial to stations which fail to toe the administration line, this show has responded by directing much of its most acid humor against the President and his policies. It isn't always funny, but it's almost brave.

The final entry in this sweepstakes is unhappy. I dutifully watched the first evening of "Madhouse 90," but was unable to do more. It was a collection of somnolent spoofs of TV shows that are unwittingly funny to start with: a satire of "This Is Your Life" is overkill, and a send-up of "Let's Make A Deal" that includes jokes like "I'll give you $100,000 if you've got a bullet in your chest" are too far past the line of good taste to be pulled back over it by pie-throwing routines; which, so help me, was what this program closed with.

So that's how this stuff looks in itself. I must say it also (barring "Madhouse") looked pretty good compared to Cavett. If ABC's replacement show had been another talking head or some miserable western, we would have been big losers. But this rather odd unbuttoned farrago of pop music and political humor—which could never have appeared in prime time—is presently refreshing. How it will look in six months is anybody's guess.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

CRAWFORD WOODS, *former TV critic for* The Washington Post, *free-lances from El Prado, NM.* BUDD SCHULBERG'S Four Seasons of Success *was recently published by Doubleday. Recently retired after 25 years on the Washington staff of* The New York Times, CABELL PHILLIPS *is the author of* The Truman Presidency *(Macmillan).*

What Price Glory?

Tallulah

by Brendan Gill

(Holt, Rinehart & Winston; $25)

Marion Davies

by Fred Lawrence Guiles

(McGraw-Hill; $8.95)

What blue-eyed blond teenage bunnies those precious old snapshots and glamorously posed portraits show them to be! Outrageous little dirvishes who snapped at men with their big, honey-colored gimme eyes and who were precociously ready to roll their bones on the biggest crap board in the world, not merely the big gamble of stage and screen but of life itself. The subjects of two current, ardent, perhaps overly worshipful biographies, Tallulah and Marion were a racy pair of 16-year-old dropouts when they burst upon the Broadway scene in the sugar-daddy years of the First World War. America, as Scott Fitzgerald liked to remind us, was getting ready for the biggest, longest and gaudiest spree in its history. Scott's apprenticeship for that faraway war also reminds us that the Jazz Age did not begin neatly on the first day of 1920. It had been creeping up on us through the first two decades. The hemline was still decorously south of the border but the psychological hemline had been rising through the '10s.

No one ever seems to dwell on the '10s as we enjoy our invocation of the '20s, '30s and '40s. But the '10s were truly the cradle in which the '20s rocked. The ladies of the '10s were beginning to strain figuratively if not physically against the whalebone of their corsets. Cars had a lot to do with it. Even before the words were in vogue, sheiks had begun to pick up flappers in their flivvers. Oh-you-kids had begun to use words that nice girls had never heard before. Half a century before Betty Friedan and Germaine Greer, women's lib was in the air. Ladies were out of their bustles and into social action. They were demonstrating against child labor. And war. They had started to smoke. And they wanted to vote. Jazz was in the air. And the first stirrings of Freud and the sexual revolution. For the first time sex was being discussed in mixed company. And practiced in private with a new abandonment. Fitzgerald, defining the marvelous girl with golden hair whom he met during assignment to a 1918 Army camp in Alabama, mentions Zelda's "sexual recklessness."

An upstart generation of teenagers was in rebellion not only against corsets but against all the 19th-century taboos that resisted recognition of the 20th century. The automobile brought an exciting mobility, with intriguing possibilities. The mobilization for the romantic war overseas sprinkled eligible young men across the map, into communities

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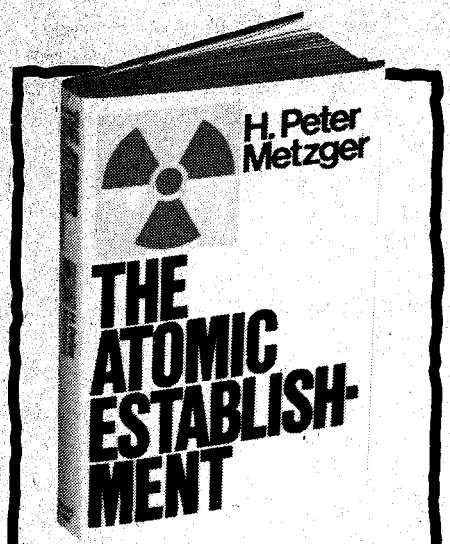

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where strangers had never been welcome before but where it was now the patriotic duty of well-brought-up young ladies to make these strangers feel at home. The war was comfortably "over there" but eloquent young Britons already had fallen in battle. There were heroic poems to quote, and a sense that tragic death for a noble cause hung over the ballroom. The slow and elegant dances were giving way to the new dance fads, the lively ragtime steps in which the partners moved faster and held each other tighter, the Turkey Trot, the Bunny Hug, and the Grizzly Bear: "But Mother said I shouldn't dare/To try and do the Grizzly Bear . . ."

The war, the motor car—the flapper and the flivver—and, of course, the impact of the movies reflected and extended the recklessness, the restlessness, the rage to live, that characterized the '20s but already was tearing old patterns asunder in the '10s. The '10s offered an irresistible stage to the unconventional, the fun-loving and the ambitious. And if this sounds contradictory, the very contradiction was in the spirit of the new age. It was no longer fashionable to keep your nose to the grindstone. Oh yes, you wanted to be somebody in the world. But there was a new, compulsive need to be the life of the party. To burn your candle at both ends, as Edna St. Vincent Millay poeticized, gave off a lovely light. Fitzgerald, who saw these girls coming, back in his Princeton days, and who was to give them their cultural definition, describes his heroine in "The Ice Palace" as someone who "wanted to live where things happen on a big scale." Zelda Sayre and Tallulah Bankhead were much of a piece. They had known each other in Montgomery where they both had a hunger for kicking over the traces, shocking hell out of their elders, and daring any crazy thing that popped into their quicksilver young minds. Both were southern belles and re-belles, irreverent young beauties who would have been perfect Scott Fitzgerald heroines even if there had been no smitten Scott to chronicle their adventures and misadventures. The Brooklyn-born, teenage femme fatale Marion Davies was just as beguiling, just as deceptive in her blue-eyed innocence and the charming stammer that concealed both a precocious promiscuity and an inclination for prosperous older men that was to stamp her not only as an incipient flapper but as a kitten-blonde golddigger in the stage-door tradition of the Ziegfield Girls.

If the day of the flapper was at hand, if the end of the '10s and the dawning of the Roaring '20s was the best of times for the gifted adventuress, Tallulah and Marion were a couple of talented Lolita party-girls who outdid a bevy of illustrious and glamorous rivals to become legends in their own time, high-kicking and sexy-throated institutions, once-in-a-lifetime queens of the closely related and yet so different worlds over which they reigned through their glory years.

Brendan Gill's *Tallulah* is neither detailed nor incisive biography, but rather a blown-up *New Yorker* profile, a graceful if once-over-lightly evocation of the personality and ambience of Speaker Bankhead's naughty little girl as she makes her flamboyant way through the Seven Ages of Woman. There is the party-stopping 15-year-old, in quest of theatrical fame and fortune, already smoking up a storm and trying cocaine as she makes her mark with the smart set of the Algonquin. In her 20s the scene is London where she quickly becomes the cult heroine of the gallery goddesses, the stage-door Annies who drool and swoon over her, an unprecedented phenomenon, especially for British young ladies. They identified with and adored her, establishing her as the world's first ambidextrous sex symbol. Talloo was also the toast of the aristocrats who came to applaud her succession of hits and to carry her off in triumph to midnight suppers and British versions of the Arabian Nights. In 1931 she returns to America as an international star whom Hollywood is ready to groom as a successor to the mighty Marlene. But somehow, unlike Marion Davies, Hollywood never took to her and she to it, and after a series of small-bore disasters she returns to her first love, the New York theater. Again she takes the critics into camp as she had in London, lighting up impossible plays with star-quality, that mysterious amalgam of self-love, vivacity, style and sexual promise that endeared her to the star-gazing public.

Still another age, genuine success in dramatic roles, is long in coming. And the critics were not always *dahling*, a word that Miss Bankhead was to make her husky and self-mocking trademark. There was the night John Mason Brown, not known for Woollcott waspishness, began his review of her ill-chosen *Antony and Cleopatra* with: "Tallulah Bankhead barged down the Nile last night as Cleopatra—and sank." Finally there is high reward and retribution in roles that called on the best she had to

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offer, as the malevolent Regina in Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes*, and as the multi-roled centerpiece of Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth*.

In recounting these triumphs, Brendan Gill makes a valiant effort to rescue Tallulah from her legion of camp-followers, searching for the actress and the human being who lay hidden beneath those layers of self-indulgence, narcissism and personality-peddling. But Mr. Gill seems almost too kind, a little too bland, and although he adopts the proper *New Yorker* attitude of standoffishness, he still seems a step too close to the cultists who loved her to death, and frequently for the wrong reasons. For Tallulah was not only a victim of her cult, but its creator as well. Brendan Gill honors her for the energy and hard work she devoted to her craft. But if one discusses her with the directors of her best American performances, he finds that much of that energy and drive went into destructive efforts to bend the company to her will, a most formidable will. It is a telling and rather chilling fact, not to be found in Mr. Gill's nicely written text, that her two most outstanding performances on the New York stage were accomplished despite her attempts to resist and unseat her directors at every turn. Yes, she may have been loved by the stagehands with whom she played five-card stud while waiting to go on, and for whom she spat out her eminent collection of four, five, six and seven-letter words. She seems to have been loved by the fellow-players she could dominate. But serious theater people tell another story, that of a willful, spoiled, self-centered troublemaker whose better instincts and professional intelligence were increasingly sacrificed to her weakness for allowing extrovert personality to take over from inner performance. The ultimate result was the desperate caricature of herself she was to present in her final season. In her tragic, farewell appearance on Broadway, in Tennessee Williams' *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*, Tallulah played what she had become, "an aging, southern has-been of an actress, groggy from drugs, alcohol and sexual excess."

It may speak for Tallulah's guts, of which she had a-plenty, that she would undertake a role revealing so cruelly the years of decay eroding the once rapturized face and figure that had lured three generations of idolators to her performances, on and off the stage. A critic who once had loved her wrote this six-word dismissal: "Miss Bank-

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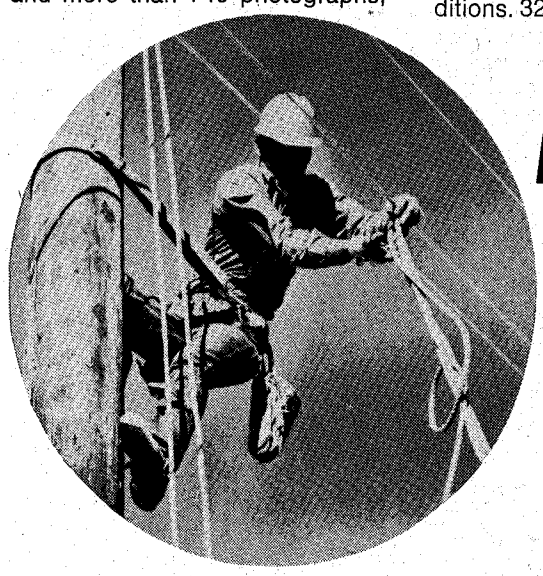

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head was hoarse and unhappy," and the play closed in a few days.

The Marion Davies story is the saga of the baby-faced Ziegfield Girl who wins the lifelong devotion of one of America's richest and most powerful men. She becomes a household word both as a movie star of the '20s and '30s and as a modern Pompadour reigning over castles on two continents, one of the richest women in the world, able to offer William Randolph Hearst himself a cool million when his regal compulsion for what Veblen calls conspicuous consumption begins to drain even his fabulous resources. After the death of W. R., she finds herself caught up in a bitter power struggle for control of the far-flung Hearst empire, and when it is wrested from her she winds up as a bejeweled alcoholic married to a misfit ex-Navy captain who turns a garden hose on her visitors, rips out all her telephones and shoves her sister in her wheelchair into the swimming pool. In the end she must be constantly attended to prevent her from falling down or from burning herself up in bed (shades of Tallulah!). Here is the stuff for a bizarre American opera. The imperious and formidable Mr. Hearst who struck such terror in the hearts of his professional subordinates becomes silly-putty in the hands of an enticing but semi-literate lush who tortures him with her string of largely inconsequential infidelities and who dares, indeed seems to take a perverse delight in cussing him out and putting him down in the presence of the world's great, from Winston Churchill to Bernard Shaw. There is something ludicrous, melodramatic but somehow touching about this domineering tycoon, whose midnight telephone calls made veteran editors and tough reporters tremble, writing bleating Victorian verses to little Marion, pleading for her love and loyalty.

Through three-and-a-half improbable decades, he could not refuse her most grandiose requests. Marion wants to add a ballroom to her palace-sized mansion to accommodate 500 guests for her never-ending parties—W. R. hires a battalion of workmen to keep working around the clock so it will be ready in time for the opening charleston. All power to the party! The party was obviously Marion's escape, from the inner tensions and self-doubts that gobs and gobs of money couldn't quench, from her lifelong frustration at never being able to become Mrs. Hearst, and from her thralldom to this elderly man she loved and defied and followed. On Hearst's part, while his chain of newspapers extolled the virtues of the American family, nothing was too good for the minx-eyed mistress. Or for her sisters and her cousins and her aunts, her nieces and nephews and even for the Papa who had walked out on the family during the period when Hearst was in the front row at the Follies every night drinking in the young charms of the budding Marion. A little later W. R. would use his political influence to have her old man appointed as a judge.

If Brendan Gill's text for *Tallulah* is once-over-lightly (although strongly supported by more than 150 pages of telling photographs, reviews, memorabilia and incisive captions), Fred Lawrence Guiles' *Marion Davies*, to the opposite, is twice and sometimes thrice over heavily, a researcher's avalanche of Marionalia. If you are interested in what Marion had for brunch in her 15-room "bungalow" on the MGM lot on September 12, 1925 (probably straight gin), chances are the meticulous Mr. Guiles will be able to supply the information. If you are convinced, as is Mr. Guiles, that Marion Davies was the premiere comedienne of her day, the prodigiousness of this research may be deserved and invaluable. In the guise of an exhaustively documented biography, his book is really a determined apologia. It is Guiles' argument that Marion's true genius was 1) not helped but greatly hindered by Hearst's shameless use of his newspapers to overpublicize and overpraise her, creating the public impression that she was not an actress who could stand on her own talents but instead had to be foisted on the public by the Hearst propaganda mill, and 2) that Orson Welles' (and Herman Mankiewicz' and Greg Toland's) *Citizen Kane* drastically distorted her very real contribution to motion pictures, since both the public and the film community, resenting Hearst's efforts on her behalf, were inclined to accept the film version of a no-talent opera star who is the tragic tool of Kane's (Hearst's) overweening ambition for her.

This reviewer hasn't seen those old Davies flicks since he was in knickers, and can't make a judgment. Guiles has studied them devotedly, and could be right. But he is so obsessed with this conclusion that he puts it to us no less than half a dozen times. "He that repeateth a matter separateth friends," the Good Book tells us.

Despite their different histories (Marion the restless but willing captive of

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the Great God Hearst, Tallulah the Alabama "shtarker" who had "5000 lovers" because she was too much for any single one of them), it is striking to find how many passages in one of the books aptly describe the subject of the other. Brendan Gill writes of Tallulah: "Her needs were many and outrageous and unappeasable. . . . She despised hypocrisy, and her willingness to let the unconventional episodes in her private life be made public was a way of asserting that she had nothing to hide, nothing of which she wished to be ashamed, nothing for which to feel remorse. . . . The violent scatological energy of her speech . . . [was] intended to convey an impression of untrammeled emotional freedom, and it was not so. . . . The common view of her, which she encouraged, was that she was somehow an undisciplined outsider, a gifted amateur, who drank too much and talked too much and turned cartwheels on stage for want of something more professional to do. The facts were otherwise. . . . Year after year, how she worked! Indeed she may have worked harder than any of her fellow-actresses of the period, though she took care to conceal her drudging. She liked to be thought a party girl and a scapegrace, and she had reasons." This could be Marion. One could also read Marion for Tallulah in: "What was she to do with the thing she had become? She *was* different, and not alone in respect to her talent and vitality. She flailed about in paroxysms of disguised bewilderment, drinking and clowning and cursing and showing off. She was valiant and silly, and she knew it. . . . Out of exceptional qualities, she invented by trial and error an exceptional self, which she flung with a child's impudent pretense of not-caring straight into the face of the world." Wherever Tallulah was was where the party was, Brendan Gill tells us, and once again he overlaps with Guiles' account of Marion's frenetic days and nights as he writes: "Her ideal was to leave the house, give a performance . . . and come back to find lights blazing, servants abed, the party still under way."

For all the Tallulah and silent movie buffs, these books are a welcome package. But their glamorous bindings cannot conceal the essential tragedy of the Misses Bankhead and Davies. Like Zelda Fitzgerald's, the party was over, all over, long before the end of their days. Drinking and dancing and cursing and showing off (and inwardly suffering and failing), they were born to a time that knew not night from day nor work from play. They were afraid not to laugh, just as we of the strung-out '70s are afraid to laugh. Incessant war and pollution and racial tension have made a different kind of world in which the blue-eyed flappers of the '10s, once the cynosure of all eyes, are turned into harridans that crawl deeper into their caves, self-destructive creatures of the past, played-out wraiths, boozy or potted has-beens or might-have-beens, flapped-out virtuosos, first dazzling and then hollow-eyed ornaments of an age they raucously helped to make, relentlessly helped to entertain, and finally helped to bury. Honey-haired darlings of the ragtime '10s, hail and farewell, and one more for that long, long road.

Budd Schulberg

An Adoring Daughter

Harry S. Truman

by Margaret Truman

(William Morrow; $10.95)

A President, it has been said, is many men. He is chief executive, commander-in-chief, chief ceremonial officer, and so on. But he is also, in his off hours, pretty much like the rest of us, prey to the virtues, sins, vanities and impulses of ordinary mortals. And if he is luckier than most he has a witty, intelligent and adoring daughter to make him all of a piece in a lively, warm-hearted biography.

That is the sum of Margaret Truman's life chronicle of her "Dad" in her forthrightly titled *Harry S. Truman.* She makes no claims of objectivity or definitiveness in her narrative; "my father" was nearly always right in his decisions and she accepts uncritically his interpretations of the controversies and large affairs in which he was engaged. But her choice of material from Harry Truman's storybook career is comprehensive, and she fleshes out many of the episodes, large and small, with an intimate, close-up perspective that will reward the scholar as it entertains the ordinary reader. What we get is a sharper understanding of the *kind* of man it was who, coming without much promise out of the fading frontier tradition of the western plains, became a politician by chance and a decisive force in the history of his and our times.

Many historians have awaited the appearance of this book with professional interest that is often edged with envy. They have wondered whether Miss Truman (Mrs. E. C. Daniel in private life) would make use of the supposedly substantial store of documentary information on the Truman presidency that has remained beyond their reach in the private wing of the Truman Memorial Library at Independence, Mo. More than one serious researcher has complained about the paucity of significant papers and correspondence available to them at the library that would throw new light on critical national and international episodes that Mr. Truman wrestled with. They have been told that such material—if it exists—is being held among the former President's private papers, to be released only at his discretion.

The answer to the question above is that very little that shows up in this book appears to have been lifted from any secret and confidential archive. No chancelleries are going to topple, no certainties become unhinged, because of any revelations made here. Apparently the greatest single advantage Miss Truman has enjoyed over other chroniclers of her father's career is free access to a calendar-diary he kept on his desk and on which he jotted down his instant-replay reactions to the people and events that marched past his desk. There are many delectable tidbits and a few meaty morsels among these entries, but they tell us a good deal more

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about Harry Truman's temperament and crotchets than about the problems he dealt with.

Inevitably there is quite a bit here about Margaret Truman herself. And properly so, for as an only child she was a powerful magnet for Harry Truman's love and his constant solicitude. He wrote to her frequently (as he did to other members of his family) when they were apart and often disclosed some glimpses of his state of mind in respect to whatever issue of politics or statecraft was uppermost at the moment. One has only to recall his notable feud with a Washington music critic over Margaret's singing ability (there is an interesting bit of background hereon in these pages) to be reminded that *Mister* Truman rarely permitted *President* Truman to get in his way, and vice versa. When she says that "the entire Truman Administration was glued to the radio" on the night of March 16, 1947, when she gave her first professional concert, you just have to believe it.

Occasionally too her privileged propinquity to presidential goings-on yields many interesting sidelights, if not to the history, at least to the folklore of the great office. She tells, for example, of a state visit to Brazil in 1947 in which the presidential flying party stopped overnight in Trinidad. In order to meet their scheduled reception in Rio the next day they had to take off from Trinidad at 3 am—in a tropical downpour.

"To complicate matters," she writes, "we all had to dress in formal clothes, Mother and I in our best dresses and hats, and Dad and his entourage in striped trousers and morning coats. We looked like a bunch of broken down actors leaving town one jump ahead of the sheriff."

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Miss Truman's long narrative (it runs to almost 600 pages including a number of hitherto unpublished photographs) follows the general pattern of her father's two-volume memoirs published 18 years ago. We are introduced to the sturdy members of the Truman and Young clans, late-vintage frontiersmen on the Missouri plains, and to that most remarkable character, Martha Ellen Young Truman, whose first child, Harry, was born in 1884. She and her husband wanted to give the boy a middle name, either Solomon or Shippe, both of which were in the family line, but they couldn't decide which and so left him with only the unfulfilled S. Martha Truman was a canny, tough-fibered woman with a strong vein of Baptist morality in her makeup. Harry Truman's character was shaped in her mold and she strongly influenced his life until the day of her death in 1947.

We follow the familiar path of Truman's unremarkable youth and young manhood: into and out of the army in World War I; the culmination of his long, one-and-only courtship of Bess Wallace; the brief disaster of his venture into the haberdashery business in Kansas City, and thence through the portals of the corrupt Pendergast political establishment. It is generally recognized that Truman, himself, was never tainted by this long and politically profitable association, but Margaret gives us a fresh insight into the gnawing sense of guilt he endured trying to rationalize his role as the honest protegé of a dishonest Boss.

And so, in 1934, on to the Big Time, the US Senate. Margaret, a leggy, wonder-struck school girl at the time enlivens the family record of those years with an array of amusing and sometimes poignant anecdotes. The Trumans were all somewhat overwhelmed by the spin of fortune's wheel. She also attempts, less convincingly, to make her Dad seem a bigger fish in the Washington puddle than he actually was. It was not until his chairmanship of the Senate War Investigating Committee well into his second term that the junior senator from Missouri began to make national headlines.

One striking bit of new information she unfolds concerns Roosevelt's choice of her father to be his running-mate in 1944. The conventional wisdom has been that FDR preferred Jimmy Byrnes above Truman for this slot but abandoned him at the urging of Democratic city bosses because he had left the Catholic Church. Miss Truman says the opposite was true: she was told by Jim Farley that Roosevelt "ordered the bosses to spread this story" in order to eliminate Byrnes from the running.

The Truman presidency occurred during a period of almost unparalleled domestic strife and international tension. The familiar highlights of those seven and three-quarter years are all touched upon here—the atomic bomb, the Potsdam conference, birth of the United Nations, ceaseless turmoil over reconversion and labor policy, the slambang reelection campaign of 1948, the Marshall Plan, NATO, the Alger Hiss affair, the Korean war and much more. Miss Truman does not explore these happenings in anything like the depth that some other chroniclers have, or even as her father did in his memoirs. She notes late in her text that she has made use of "only a small fraction" of his store of private papers. The total absence here of footnotes and source references makes it difficult to accurately identify these inclusions. But some are apparent, and so are a number of contradictions of facts that have seemed fairly well-established.

We learn here for example that her father's apparent indecision and turnabout in respect to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 was the result neither of indecision nor a turnabout, but rather of a deliberate "double cross" by, in her father's words, "people in the third and fourth levels of the State Dept. who have always wanted to cut my throat." He had always favored the partition of Palestine, she says, but at a critical 11th-hour juncture in the proceedings the "striped pants conspirators" at the State Department gave out the country's official line as favoring a UN trusteeship. The President was furious. When Israel declared itself a state on May 14, however, US recognition was proclaimed exactly 11 minutes later. "This was a decision made by Dad alone," Margaret writes, "in spite of the opposition of the State Department conspirators."

Some of Miss Truman's conclusions, however, do not go down as smoothly as her revelations. She asserts for example that her father "specifically rejected the policy of containment." This was the famous doctrine adduced by George F. Kennan in 1946 as a free-world countermeasure to Communist expansionism. It is not clear in what manner, if any, President Truman "rejected" this doctrine, but any study of the diplomatic history of the period tends to refute such an idea. It was the

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acknowledged concept of "containment" that underpinned the Greek-Turkish Aid Program, the Marshall Plan, NATO and even the intervention in Korea. Miss Truman assumes that a major study by the National Security Council popularly known as NSC-68 was the foundation of her father's aggressive foreign policy. The fact is, however, that NSC-68 was a nuts and bolts—or more properly a guns and dollars—implementation of the containment doctrine. The two propositions were complementary.

Inevitably, Miss Truman's book suffers from the same weakness that afflicts her father's memoirs—or anyone else's memoirs for that matter. That is the built-in quality of bias and subjectivity. She's damn proud of her Dad, as well she should be, and she is not going to let any shadows of doubt be cast over his image of greatness. Granted that forgivable bit of license, she greatly enriches our view of her distinguished father as both a President and a man. His death makes us all want to recall the things about Harry Truman that made him great—his honesty, his courage, his warm, unpretentious humaneness. This book, so fortuitously timed, gives us that picture in generous detail.

Cabell Phillips

Kauffmann, *from page 24*

hall is empty, with strings marking the rented spaces, and in a long shot, as men walk around the wide floor stepping over the (to us invisible) strings, they seem to be dancing. Two auto mechanics, who have just seen the moon-walking astronauts on TV, move around a garage in imitation of the heavy-floaty astronaut walk. A wheel rolls away from an accident, and a Volkswagen rolls after it, its hood flapping up and down as if to snap up the wheel. White traffic markings on a highway flow past the camera in a delirious ballet. None of these sequences, you'll note, has Mr. Hulot in them, which may be why the net effect of the film is cool.

Yet it is a work proceeding from a central vision. Tati acknowledges the help of Jacques LaGrange and the noted Dutch filmmaker Bert Haanstra, but the best pleasure in the film is the sense of his control. Including the soundtrack which, in typical quirky Tati style, records only what it chooses to. I should mention, too, for parents that I saw *Traffic* in a theater full of children, who seemed to enjoy it.

The Heartbreak Kid is the latest in a relatively new kind of American film comedy—glittery trash. Most of these pictures come from Neil Simon, who wrote this one, or his imitators. A previous example, *A New Leaf*, was directed by Elaine May, who directed this one. It glitters because there are some smart cracks in it and some facile observation of contemporary mores. It is trash because it betrays its subject matter, strains credibility, and swoons as sentimentally with "heart," in a hip manner, as any Victorian ever did in purple.

The original story by Bruce Jay Friedman, "A Change of Plan," is deft and astringent: a young man on his honeymoon is attracted by another girl; leaves his new wife and chases Girl Two to her Midwest home; eventually gets divorced and marries the new girl; and, at the wedding reception, finds himself attracted to the girl's mother. Simon's screenplay inflates and warps it all, changing a succinct story of a man without an emotional center into a fuzzy tale of a Feiffer-imitation fake gogetter. And Friedman's point is jettisoned for no point whatsoever.

On the honeymoon the film wife is made a ludicrous fool, who keeps asking during intercourse whether her husband thinks it's wonderful, who dribbles egg salad all over her chin, who gets herself severely sunburned in Miami (a patent set-up) and then smears herself repellently with cream. If the husband had *not* run away from her, it would have been a surprise. The sledgehammer writing and performance of the girl (by Jeannie Berlin, May's daughter) kills any chance for us to think the husband lightheaded. (He is played by Charles Grodin in stock metropolitan-Jew revue-sketch manner.)

Here are some questions that this highly praised film left me with:

1) If Berlin is such a boor, why did Grodin marry her?

2) If she doesn't know she's a boor, she must be staggeringly stupid. Again why did he marry her?

3) Why in the world did Girl Two, luscious Cybill Shepherd, pick up Grodin on the beach? *Him?*

4) When he chases Shepherd to her expensive Minneapolis home, how could her mother, unless she was an idiot, possibly be impressed by his moronic flattery at dinner? What insight does it show in the girl's father to tell Grodin privately that he has seen through the dinner-table talk and thinks it's a "crock of horseshit"? What infant would not have known as much?

5) How does this obvious phony finally persuade the very hard-headed father to let him marry the girl? This transition is simply omitted.

6) What in the world does the ending mean? In the last shot, Grodin is seen at his (second) wedding reception, after he has repeatedly mouthed platitudes to various guests, sitting alone on a sofa, deserted, "lost." Have we seen here the portrait of a rapidly degenerating psychotic? Is that what this comedy is all about?

Except for the refreshment of Shepherd's appearance and Eddie Albert's understated performance as her father, this film is meretricious, stone-fingered and unbelievable, all done with a smart-ass tone that is supposed to make us think it's comically candid. Simon and May have just found new tinsel wrappings for trash.

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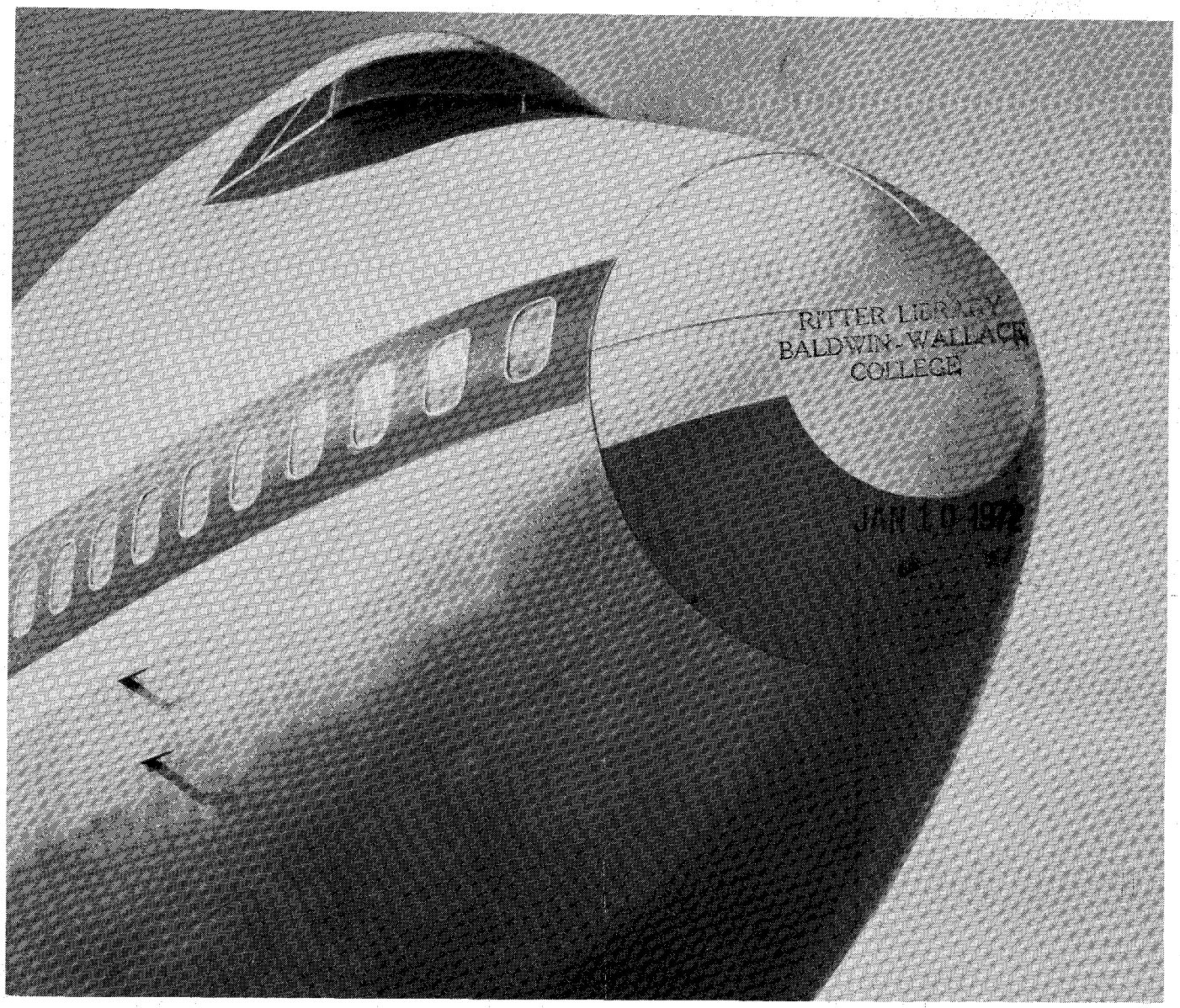
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